

THE TIMES

35P

No. 66,026

TUESDAY OCTOBER 21 1997

http://www.the-times.co.uk

MEMO TO THE DUCHESS
Get back in the fold by staying quiet
PAGE 19

TRY MOTOR RACING
£5
Try motor racing, flying, climbing, caving, rafting, and many more...
TOKEN 2 PAGE 37

BIRTH WITHOUT THE BLUES
Save this pioneering work says Nigella Lawson
PAGE 18

PRE-MATCH BEETHOVEN
The sensitive side of Peter Schmeichel
PAGE 48

Shares survive 'Brown Monday'

Blair pledges he will not harm EMU

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

TONY BLAIR promised Helmut Kohl yesterday that Britain would not "sabotage or undermine" a European single currency, even though it will stick with the pound for at least the next few years.

The Prime Minister told the German Chancellor, during five hours of talks at Chequers that Britain would not be entering the single currency on January 1, 1999. And he is understood to have explained the reasoning behind the expected Commons announcement that participation in economic and monetary union cannot be contemplated during the present Parliament.

But he sought to reinforce the Government's European credentials by promising to use Britain's six-month presidency "constructively" as other countries prepare to sign up.

As shares fell at the prospect of Britain staying out of EMU, Gordon Brown also dropped another strong hint that Britain would not adopt the euro this side of an election, and senior Treasury officials continued to reiterate that interpretation of his remarks in an interview published in *The Times* on Saturday.

The Chancellor was again accused of mishandling the disclosure of the Government's intentions — both by opposition MPs and in the City — but he appeared to be riding out the storm. Although the day began with a substantial fall in share prices, "Brown Monday" — as the traders called it, over the weekend — was a recovery. The FT-SE 100 index closed some 60 points down.

Mr Brown, however, was at first hand as the market dipped. He was saying a



Five hours of lunch! Do they want coffee or will it be straight on to dinner?

prearranged visit to the Stock Exchange to launch its new electronic trading system — which at one point appeared to buckle under the strain with some leading shares vanishing from the screen.

After a weekend of turmoil and confusion sparked by Mr Brown's refusal to commit in public what government officials have briefed most news organisations in private, there was some relief among ministers last night that the pain had not been worse. As expected, the pound rose three pence to DM2.888.

Ministers' hope that the markets have now been prepared for the formal announcement on the single currency, soon after MPs return to Westminster next week. But analysts expected Mr Brown's speech of a loss of confidence in the Government after the mixed signals of recent weeks — a report three weeks ago that the Government was likely to adopt the euro sooner rather than later had sent shares up and the pound down.

The episode gave the Conservatives another opportu-

ty to attack the prominent role of the Government's so-called spin doctors, and there were worries in Labour circles, too, that a machine that had worked so well in opposition had hit trouble.

A call by Peter Lilley, the Shadow Chancellor, for the resignation of the Chancellor's press secretary Charlie Whelan was rejected. But the Tories had a rare chance to attack, saying that Mr Brown had mishandled EMU with "serious implications for the state of the financial markets and the wellbeing of people's savings and investments".

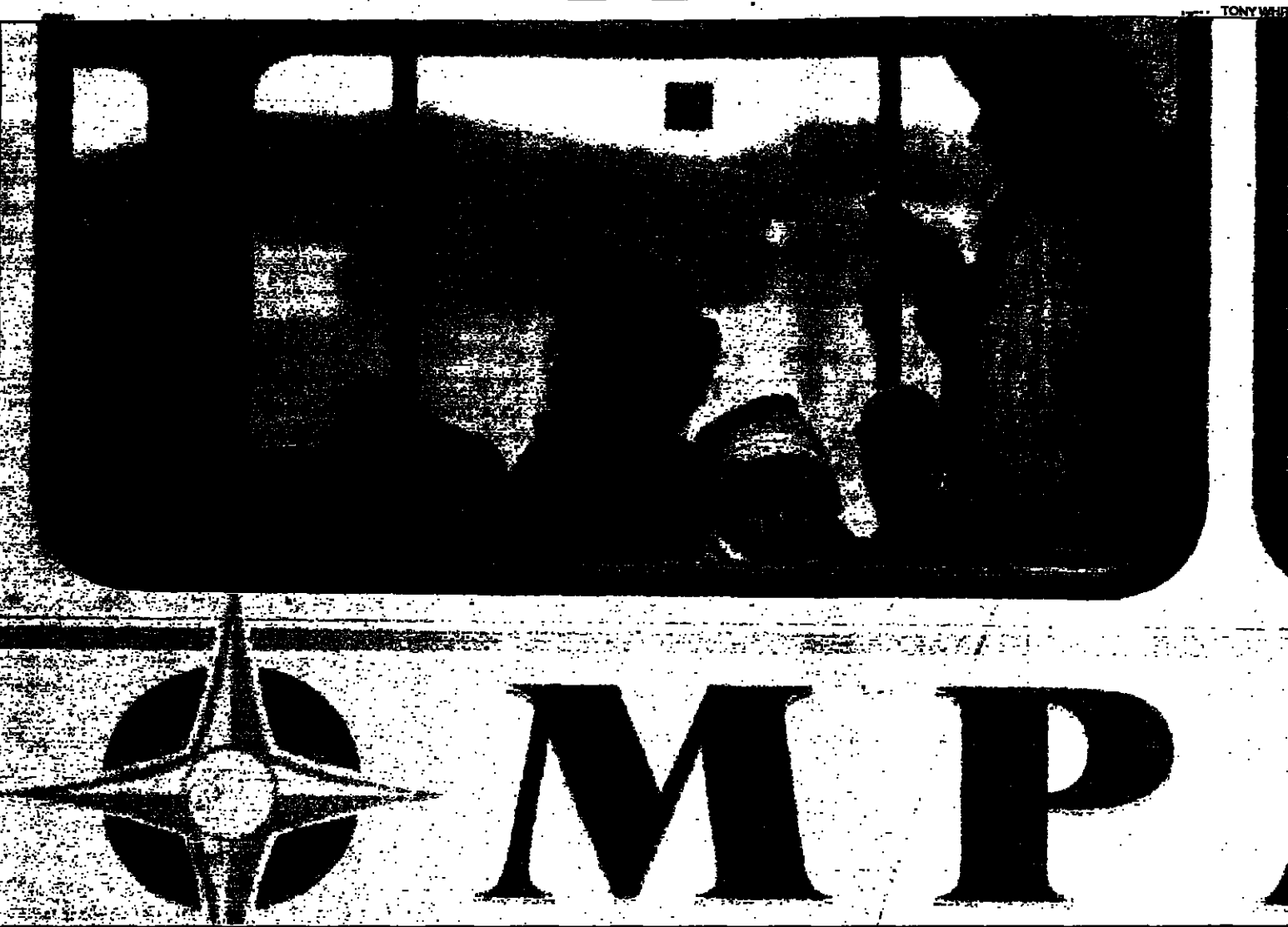
Mr Lilley again demanded that the Commons should be recalled so that Mr Brown could make a statement. Alternatively, there could be a statement in the Lords, which is meeting this week, he said.

"For the pro-EMU Liberal Democrats, Treasury spokesman Malcolm Bruce accused the Chancellor of causing a 'muddled Monday' by refusing to issue a clear statement on European policy."

Attacking the use of spin doctors, he said: "The Treasury cannot go on making and communicating policy in this way — the Chancellor should get a grip on his spin doctors and make important policy announcements to Parliament in the usual way, rather than through selective briefings to the press."

Some City economists joined opposition politicians in condemning the way policy was emerging via briefings. Simon Briscoe, the head of research at Nikko Europe, said: "It's a sad state of affairs."

Continued on page 2, col 4
Anastasia Katsky and John Munk, page 20
Leading article and Letters, page 21
Business News, page 27
Stock market, page 33



The latest batch of asylum seekers arrives at Dover yesterday. Council officials have appealed for government help to cope with the influx

EU treaty blamed for Gypsy influx

By Richard Ford and Adrian Lee

EMERGENCY measures were being prepared by the Government and Kent county council last night to cope with the flood of Czech and Slovak Gypsies seeking political asylum in Britain.

As authorities in Slovakia prepared to make television and radio appeals urging people not to travel to Britain, ministers were considering sending extra immigration officers to Dover to help to process asylum applications.

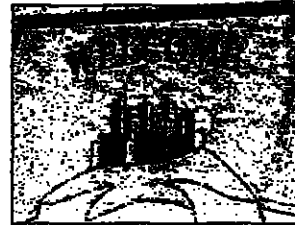
In Kent, a disused nursing home with room for up to 100 people has been opened and the county council has also been offered the use of a disused army barracks.

The Government is facing the refugee crisis after the introduction of an EU Convention last month that has undermined its ability to remove asylum seekers speedily from Britain. Until last month, any asylum-seeker who had passed through another EU state could be sent back on the grounds that the application should have been lodged in the "first safe country".

But under the Dublin Convention on immigration, non-EU refugee seekers travelling without visas can apply for asylum not at the first safe country, but in the state in which they wish to live. Immigration officials of that state then process the applications.

A further 26 European Gypsies arrived at Dover yesterday as Kent county council appealed for government help to meet the £1million-£2million bill to provide emergency accommodation and education for the 800 asylum seekers in the Channel port.

The eight families arrived aboard a coach yesterday, but seven people were sent back and the rest were put in



A Czech video portrays a welcome in Britain

temporary accommodation at Millmead Nursing home in Margate. The Ministry of Defence has offered a disused barracks at Deal.

Yesterday's influx was in addition to the 46 Slovaks and 125 Czechs who arrived between 17 October and 19 October. A total of 125 claimed asylum, but 38 abandoned their applications. Seventy four were returned to Calais yesterday.

According to a Kent council official, a further 2,000 Gypsy asylum seekers are heading

for Britain. A council source said: "We have been told there are several hundreds more on the way. The French and Germans don't want to know, and although officially we are co-operating, the reality is that they are just ushering them through."

The local authority estimated that the final bill would reach £2 million at a time when it was being forced to make swingeing budget cuts of £27 million.

Feelings were yesterday running high in Dover, where the opening of the Channel tunnel has hit the local ferry economy.

The attitude of some of the Slovaks has inflamed the situation. One said yesterday: "With all I get here as an immigrant I can live better than working at home."

Mike O'Brien, the Immigration Minister, met Gwyn Prosser, the Labour MP for Dover, and will see county officials later this week.

The Gypsies arrived after two television programmes in the Czech Republic reported that British benefits and the asylum system were easy to manipulate.

Parents protest, page 10
Pogrom fears, page 11
Leading Article, page 21

Microsoft threat

Janet Reno, the US Attorney General, has accused Microsoft of being an unlawful monopoly and threatened to fine it \$1million a day over a row over Internet browsers.

Cheating row

A primary school descended into chaos after classes argued over exam cheating, an industrial tribunal heard. Page 4

TV & RADIO	50.51
WEATHER	50.51
CRICKET	50.51
LEISURE	50.51
OBITUARIES	50.51
LIBRARY	50.51
ARTS	50.51
CHESS & BRIDGE	50.51
COURT & SOCIAL	50.51
SPORT	50.51
LAW	50.51
BODY AND MIND	50.51

Buying The Times overseas
Australia \$20.00, Belgium 18.00, Canada \$18.00, Chile \$18.00, Cyprus £11.20, Denmark 16.00, Finland 16.00, France 16.00, Germany 14.00, Greece 14.00, Hong Kong 14.00, India 14.00, Italy 14.00, Japan 14.00, Korea 14.00, Malaysia 14.00, Mexico 14.00, New Zealand 14.00, Norway 14.00, Portugal 14.00, Singapore 14.00, Spain 14.00, Sweden 14.00, Switzerland 14.00, Taiwan 14.00, Thailand 14.00, USA 14.00, Venezuela 14.00.

Man charged with Russell murders

By Lin Jervings

DETECTIVES investigating the deaths of Lin Russell and her daughter Megan yesterday charged a man they have held for three months on unrelated robbery and burglary charges with the two murders.

Michael John Stone, 37, of Gillingham, Kent, is charged with murdering Mrs Russell and her six-year-old daughter, and with the attempted murder of Josie Russell, now ten, who has made a remarkable recovery since being left for dead in the woods near a farm track in Gillingham, Kent, in July last year.

Mr Stone, unemployed, will appear before Medway magistrates in Chatham, Kent, this morning.

Mrs Russell, 45, her daughters and the family dog Lucy were attacked as they walked the two-mile cross country route from their village school



Lin Russell, left, and Megan: killed during walk home

to their home in Nonington after a swimming gala.

Josie was the sole survivor and underwent extensive surgery to her battered skull. She was left brain damaged and the speech skills of a two-year-old, but has made a rapid recovery with the help of psychologists, speech therapists, teachers and her father Shaun.

When police found the bloody scene in the woods they believed all had been killed and told Mr Russell so.

But despite her massive head injuries, Josie continued to recover in intensive care in King's College Hospital, London.

Just over a year after her ordeal she was able to describe to police the horrific details of

the late afternoon last year when she, her mother and sister were bound and gagged before being battered with an object, probably a hammer.

Mr Russell left his job as an academic in Kent to take his daughter back to Welsh hills where she had spent most of her young life.

He has spoken about how his own despair was relieved by the brightness and courage of his daughter, but he was unable to cast off his great fear for her personal safety.

He said: "When I realised Josie was still alive and needed help, my whole way of looking at life changed. She is a normal strong-minded little girl. The person I am looking after has given me cause for carrying on."

Investigation into the double murder prompted a massive public appeal for information and the police were contacted by more than a thousand people.

Smear test blunders identified

RADICAL changes have been ordered into the way cervical smear tests are conducted after a report detailed serious failings in the way the service operated at one hospital.

The independent inquiry, which was published yesterday, followed the deaths from cervical cancer of five women who had all been given the all-clear by the Kent and Canterbury Hospital. Dozens more have needed hysterectomies or radiation treatment.

Regional health boards are to be put in overall charge of the tests instead of laboratories competing to carry them out to earn money.

The inquiry found bad management, understaffing and a breakdown in relationships between staff.

Path to reform, page 6

Japanese 'entitled to three times pay of Britons'

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

A CITY company was entitled to pay British staff a third of what it paid Japanese workers for doing the same job, a tribunal ruled yesterday.

And while three British executives with the Quick Corporation had been dismissed because of their race, it did not follow that they had been denied promotion for the same reason, the Employment Appeals Tribunal held. The executives won a landmark case

for unfair dismissal in January, but an industrial tribunal held that they had not suffered discrimination in being paid so much less than colleagues drafted in from Japan. Yesterday the appeals tribunal upheld that ruling.

Cliff Wakeman, Ashok Solanki and Stewart Mitchell all claimed unlawful discrimination because of their low pay in comparison to Japanese colleagues. Mr Solanki said that he received £39,500 while a less experienced man was paid £220,000 when he took over as his job.

Robin Allen, QC, for the men, said that Japanese nationals were sometimes paid "three or four times" as much as British staff and that the policy was racially tainted. Even allowing for the additional expenses of living in a foreign country, staff from Japan received "significantly" higher wages. But Judge Peter Clark said that the financial services company had been entitled to pay people seconded from abroad more than those resident here. The fact that they were Japanese was irrelevant.

Mr Wakeman — who had been told by Quick's deputy managing director, Noriaki Jakajima, "You have a strange skin colour and the shape of your head looks like a football" — had also claimed that the company had a racist promotions policy. But Judge Clark said that because all three were fired because of their race, it did not follow that they were not promoted because of their race.

The three are, however, still expected to receive six-figure damages for their unfair dismissal.

BVLGARI
CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN JEWELLERS



How the message was confused with the messengers

Philip Webster, Political Editor, analyses the events that put Labour's spin-doctors in an angry mood

THE information flow was fairly dry yesterday. The row over the single currency left Labour's senior spin-doctors facing Monday morning in an angry and frustrated mood. One member of this battle-hardened group even complained of persecution.

A senior government source allowed his irritation to boil over at a briefing, accusing the press collectively of being "in bonkersville" and certain journalists of trying to stand by stories they knew to be wrong. He referred contemptuously to the *Financial Times* — which on September 28 wrongly suggested that the Government would take Britain into economic and monetary union soon — as "the Bible of the City".

The reason for their annoyance

was obvious. The message they had intended to get across over the weekend, that Gordon Brown would shortly be ruling out membership of the single currency for the lifetime of this Parliament, had descended into yet another dispute over the messengers. Government spin doctors did not suddenly come into existence on May 1, but parts of the media seemed to think so. Maybe they have forgotten how the redoubtable Bernard Ingham virtually spun John Biffen out of the Cabinet in the Thatcher years or how the pound fell dramatically one Monday morning in 1985 after a Sunday paper was briefed that the Government would maintain a

hands-off attitude to the pound even if that meant parity with the dollar and the mark.

The spinners have been in trouble this weekend, mostly because of the enthusiasm with which they "stood up" the splash story in *The Times* on Saturday. They eagerly concurred, as the first editions appeared on Friday night, with our interpretation that Mr Brown was on the verge of ruling out membership before the next election. When it was reported yesterday that Charlie Whelan, the Chancellor's press secretary, was doing so from — horror of horrors — the Red Lion pub in Whitehall, the sense of outrage increased. The Tories

called for Mr Whelan to be dismissed yesterday. Predictably the word from Number 10 and the Treasury was that he was secure.

The interview happened for two key reasons. *The Times* had suspected for at least two weeks that the Chancellor wanted to kill the *Financial Times* report that Britain would enter soon after the 1999 launch date, and had sought clarification, preferably in remarks from Mr Brown. Mr Brown and Mr Blair decided it was time to say something more definitive about the future. They knew that the formal announcement would have to be made to Parliament, which does not resume sitting until next

Tuesday. However, the *FT* story had refused to go away, and there was an ever-present threat of stories suggesting that the Prime Minister was at odds with his Chancellor. It was also necessary to prepare the City for the eventual announcement.

The two had a series of meetings last week. On Thursday night, they agreed that Mr Brown should send a signal in the opposite direction. It was a decision taken in secrecy. Only the Chancellor, his closest aides, Alastair Campbell, the Downing Street press secretary, Robin Cook, John Prescott, Peter Mandelson and one or two other key Number 10 aides knew. Mr

Blair's objections would almost certainly have been primarily on political grounds. Along with Mr Brown, he does not want Labour's first term in office for 18 years to be dominated by the sort of Euro-row that so damaged the Tories. Mr Brown accepts that on economic grounds, too, the case could not be made for early entry.

When it came, Mr Brown's hint was broad. Having effectively ruled out membership in 1999, the Chancellor said that thereafter he did not want to face daily or monthly speculation. As he made plain, the decision had still to be taken formally. In fact, the discussion that mattered had already

taken place. Mr Brown repeated the line even more strongly yesterday, suggesting that what would be needed was a period of "stability without speculation".

The *Times*' interpretation was not challenged by the Treasury or Downing Street on Friday night, throughout the weekend or yesterday, even though the City continued to perceive conflicting signals, notably in another *FT* report yesterday that suggested that although Labour would not enter the single currency this Parliament in the long-term it remains positive towards the project. When Mr Brown makes his statement to Parliament, it will be one of the most carefully worded in recent times, but it will not be an occasion for leaving too much to spin.

Field adds two more studies on the welfare state

NINE separate studies are currently being carried out by different government ministers and Whitehall departments into the future of the welfare state, it emerged yesterday.

Frank Field, the Minister for Welfare Reform, has asked Social Security officials to draw up proposals to curb the soaring costs of disability benefits. He has also demanded a review of the £600 million industrial injuries compensation scheme. These two previously unknown reviews add to the seven existing ones, which include:

- A Green Paper for long term welfare reform, drawn up by Mr Field, to be published in the New Year.
- A study into how the tax and benefits system can be integrated, carried out by Martin Taylor, the head of Barclays Bank. The report is expected next spring but some internal findings could be included in Gordon Brown's green budget next month.

Mr Field realises that there are inherent contradictions between his plans which involve moving away from means tested benefits and Mr Taylor's remit which would effectively extend means testing. He has told friends that if Mr Taylor's plans go ahead, his own are in jeopardy.

- A taskforce on welfare to work, headed by Sir Peter Davis, chief executive of the Prudential Corporation.
- A Green Paper on pension reform, carried out by John Denham, the Social Security Minister, which will flesh out details of the Government's planned second "stakeholder" pension.
- Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, is poised to announce a new Royal Commission on long term health care that will look at nursing homes, residential care and home helps. It will report within a year.
- A Social Exclusion Unit, launched by Peter Mandelson in the Autumn but chaired by Tony Blair, will look at ways of helping areas of deep-seated poverty throughout the country.

Minister at the heart of classic Whitehall battle
Jill Sherman and James Landale report

Mr Field's broad approach to welfare reform involves greater use of private insurance to replace state provision. Two ideas which he is currently pushing include compulsory second pensions and an insurance-based scheme for elderly nursing care.

This approach has, however, placed him at the heart of a classic Whitehall battle. He was appointed by the Prime Minister to "think the unthinkable" on welfare reform, what Mr Blair calls his second most important priority. However Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, is known to be concerned at the possible increased spending implications of his plans.

Mr Field's two new studies are the forerunners for the first stages of welfare reform and legislation could be introduced next year.

reform. It was another important signal that he may have won over Mr Blair to the case for a root and branch shake-up.

First, social security officials have been asked urgently to draw up detailed plans for streamlining disability benefits which now cost the Exchequer £23.5 billion, a quarter of the social security budget.

That study will look at all six disability benefits, which include allowances for disabled people who work, those who are unemployed and their carers.

Second, Mr Field has asked officials to undertake a separate review of the £600 million industrial injuries benefit scheme. The favoured option is to replace some or all of these two types of benefit by personal insurance schemes, a plan which in this case is backed by the Treasury.



Helmut Kohl and Tony Blair had a "warm and friendly" meeting at Chequers

Continued from page 1
that policy on something as important as EMU is being run from hour to hour.

And warning of longer-term damage from the episode, he added: "The financial markets were historically a weak spot for Labour governments and in the first few months, Labour had shown that things had changed and they took several initiatives which were welcomed by markets. This sort of event helps to undermine a lot of the good work that has been

EMU vow

done. The full costs of the weekend's fiasco will not be measured today."

Few details emerged of Mr Blair's meeting with Herr Kohl, which was largely intended to prepare for the British EU presidency which starts on January 1. But with the controversy surrounding the single currency, the issue clearly figured strongly in their talks.

Downing Street said that the long meeting helped to cement "a warm personal relationship founded on mutual trust and respect". A spokesman for Herr Kohl said simply that the meeting went well and helped to foster Anglo-German relations.

Anatole Kaletsky and John Hoopes page 20
Leading article and Letters page 21
Business News page 27
Stock market page 33

NEWS IN BRIEF

Medical victims to get 'no fault' payouts

Victims of medical accidents would no longer have to pursue costly court cases but instead would be compensated automatically under proposals to be considered by the Government. The idea for a "no fault" compensation scheme in the field of medical negligence is one of a raft of reforms published by the Lord Chancellor yesterday.

The Lord Chancellor's Department officials confirmed that they would look further at the idea, which has been floated by Sir Peter Middlebrook, the former Treasury permanent secretary. Another idea is a review of the fundamental rule in English litigation in which the loser pays the costs of the winner. Sir Peter urges a review of tribunals and their procedures and proposes introducing "entry" fees. A fourth recommendation is that restrictions applying to legal expenses insurance be reviewed.

Train drivers 'drowsy'

The Health and Safety Executive is investigating reports that train drivers at Connex South Eastern, which operates services in Kent, are sometimes overworked and in danger of falling asleep at the controls. More than 600 drivers are working under a new agreement that requires frequent 10-hour shifts and some have complained of feeling drowsy. Connex says that the drivers' working arrangements were approved by the safety executive this summer.

Girl, 12, sues mother

A 12-year-old girl yesterday took her mother to the High Court in an attempt to prevent her taking her from Britain to live with her in Denmark. The girl, who cannot be named, had run away from Denmark last year to stay with her father in Reading. Lady Justice Butler-Sloss invited the two, who had not seen each other for a year, to "have a cup of tea and a bun" in a bid to stop the legal battle. The girl has been ordered to remain with her father until judgment is given.

Unionists snub BBC

The Ulster Unionist Party rejected an invitation to join Sinn Féin on *Question Time* this Thursday and challenged the BBC to cancel the programme. The Democratic Unionist Party also refused to join Gerry Adams or Martin McGuinness for Sinn Féin's inaugural appearance. Government sources said there was virtually no chance of a minister being on the panel if the Unionists refused to take part in the current affairs programme.

Duchess deplores leak

A spokeswoman for the Duchess of York described as "deplorable" the leaking of private letters which were apparently sent by her to members of the Royal Family after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. The comments came after newspaper reports claimed that the duchess had written to the Queen begging forgiveness as part of an attempted reconciliation with the Duke of York. The couple still live in the same house.

More cows face BSE cull

More cattle will have to be culled to speed the eradication of "mad cow" disease after the discovery that some potentially infected animals may have been missed. The Government has proposed to Brussels that the cull should be widened to include cattle which were reared alongside, and shared the same feed as, animals that have since died of bovine spongiform encephalopathy. As things stand, the cull covers only animals that were born in the same herd.

Nana and Dana show

Nana will battle it out with Dana as the race to become the next Irish president turns into a singing contest next week. Nana Mouskouri, the Greek singer and MEP, is coming to Ireland to support her fellow Strassbourgh parliamentarian Mary Banotti. Ms Banotti, the Fine Gael candidate, is currently second favourite behind Mary McAleese, the Fianna Fail candidate. Ms Mouskouri, 63, yesterday described Ms Banotti as "a very good friend".

Psychologist points finger at a man out of control

By Robin Young



Signs of stress: the Chancellor's bitten fingernails

CONFUSION over the Chancellor's position on the single currency appears to be causing him a great deal of anxiety, an expert on stress claimed yesterday.

Gordon Brown's badly bitten fingernails, featured on the cover of *The Economist* in July and unimproved at their latest outing at the stock exchange yesterday, supposedly show a man "out of control".

Cary Cooper, Professor of Psychology at the University of Manchester's Institute of Science and Technology, said that confusion over the single currency was clearly causing him a great deal of anxiety. "It seems he is stuck in the middle of an awful mess and is trying to

balance an enormous number of factors at once. Chewing nails is very common for people like him who feel stressed and out of control."

Professor Cooper, who specialises in occupational stress, is questioning 100 new MPs on the pressures they have been under since winning their seats in May. He has not revealed how many more nail biters he has uncovered, but Gordon Brown is in good company.

Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar are supposed to have shared his habit, not to mention Norma Major, John Birt, Ian Botham and the late Diana, Princess of Wales. Napoleon is even claimed to have died of ingesting the bits of nail he chewed off, though other medical opinion suggests that this was a symptom of

the stomach cancer he suffered rather than a cause. Mrs Major confessed to biting her nails until the age of 16 in an interview with *Harpers & Queen* in 1991.

Thereafter it was noted that she hid her hands when wearing an evening dress. Ian Botham displayed his badly bitten thumbnails in the High Court in 1996 as evidence that his foreshortened nails would be incapable of picking at the seam of a cricket ball, even if he wanted to cheat.

The late Diana, Princess of Wales, while Lady Diana Spencer, hid her nails in clenched fists in her engagement photographs. Later, in 1991, she told a youngster in a hostel for the homeless in Vauxhall, South London, that she still bit her nails when she was nervous.

BEST Better specs. Better prices. Better hurry.

DELL DIMENSION™ XPS D300 WITH MULTIMEDIA • INTEL PENTIUM® II PROCESSOR 300MHz • INTEL 440LX PC9704 • 64MB HIGH PERFORMANCE SDRAM • 528MB INTERNAL CACHE • 5.4GB HARD DRIVE • 4MB SDRAM VIDEO MEMORY • 17" COLOR MONITOR • HIGH PERFORMANCE THUNDERBOLT™ • 17" COLOR MONITOR • 12.25" DOT PITCH, 15.65" VIEWABLE AREA • 3 PC, 1 ISA, 1 PCI/ISA SHARED • AND 1 AGP EXPANSION SLOTS • 12-24X CD-ROM DRIVE • 40X 64 SOUND CARD AND 40X ATX LANING • AC9700 SPEAKERS WITH SUB-WOOFER • MONITOR ZIP DRIVE WITH 3 CARTRIDGES • MICROSOFT® OFFICE 97 SMALL BUSINESS EDITION £1,999 (£2,384.08)	DELL DIMENSION™ XPS D246 • INTEL PENTIUM® II PROCESSOR 300MHz • INTEL 440LX PC9704 • 32MB HIGH PERFORMANCE SDRAM • 512KB INTERNAL CACHE • 4.4GB HARD DRIVE • 4MB SDRAM VIDEO MEMORY • 17" COLOR MONITOR • HIGH PERFORMANCE THUNDERBOLT™ • 17" COLOR MONITOR • 12.25" DOT PITCH, 15.65" VIEWABLE AREA • 3 PC, 1 ISA, 1 PCI/ISA SHARED • AND 1 AGP EXPANSION SLOTS • 12-24X CD-ROM DRIVE • 40X 64 SOUND CARD (SPEAKERS OPTIONAL) • 40X 64 SOUND CARD (SPEAKERS OPTIONAL) • MICROSOFT OFFICE 97 SMALL BUSINESS EDITION £1,499 (£1,796.58)	DELL DIMENSION™ XPS D233 WITH MULTIMEDIA • INTEL PENTIUM® II PROCESSOR 300MHz • INTEL 440LX PC9704 • 32MB HIGH PERFORMANCE SDRAM • 512KB INTERNAL CACHE • 4.4GB HARD DRIVE • 4MB SDRAM VIDEO MEMORY • 17" COLOR MONITOR • HIGH PERFORMANCE THUNDERBOLT™ • 17" COLOR MONITOR • 12.25" DOT PITCH, 15.65" VIEWABLE AREA • 3 PC, 1 ISA, 1 PCI/ISA SHARED • AND 1 AGP EXPANSION SLOTS • 12-24X CD-ROM DRIVE • 40X 64 SOUND CARD (SPEAKERS OPTIONAL) • 40X 64 SOUND CARD (SPEAKERS OPTIONAL) • MICROSOFT OFFICE 97 SMALL BUSINESS EDITION £1,399 (£1,679.08)	DELL DIMENSION™ XPS D246 • INTEL PENTIUM® II PROCESSOR 300MHz • INTEL 440LX PC9704 • 32MB HIGH PERFORMANCE SDRAM • 512KB INTERNAL CACHE • 4.4GB HARD DRIVE • 4MB SDRAM VIDEO MEMORY • 17" COLOR MONITOR • HIGH PERFORMANCE THUNDERBOLT™ • 17" COLOR MONITOR • 12.25" DOT PITCH, 15.65" VIEWABLE AREA • 3 PC, 1 ISA, 1 PCI/ISA SHARED • AND 1 AGP EXPANSION SLOTS • 12-24X CD-ROM DRIVE • 40X 64 SOUND CARD (SPEAKERS OPTIONAL) • 40X 64 SOUND CARD (SPEAKERS OPTIONAL) • MICROSOFT OFFICE 97 SMALL BUSINESS EDITION £1,499 (£1,796.58)	DELL DIMENSION™ XPS D246 • INTEL PENTIUM® II PROCESSOR 300MHz • INTEL 440LX PC9704 • 32MB HIGH PERFORMANCE SDRAM • 512KB INTERNAL CACHE • 4.4GB HARD DRIVE • 4MB SDRAM VIDEO MEMORY • 17" COLOR MONITOR • HIGH PERFORMANCE THUNDERBOLT™ • 17" COLOR MONITOR • 12.25" DOT PITCH, 15.65" VIEWABLE AREA • 3 PC, 1 ISA, 1 PCI/ISA SHARED • AND 1 AGP EXPANSION SLOTS • 12-24X CD-ROM DRIVE • 40X 64 SOUND CARD (SPEAKERS OPTIONAL) • 40X 64 SOUND CARD (SPEAKERS OPTIONAL) • MICROSOFT OFFICE 97 SMALL BUSINESS EDITION £1,249 (£1,502.83)
--	---	---	---	---

The best prices on the market for Pentium® II processor based systems. We got to be the world's largest direct PC manufacturer by offering specs this big at prices this small. So you'd best call or get online to us now.

To order online 24 hours: www.dell.co.uk

DELL

Rector 'boasted of bedding two women at once'

Special church court told of 'scandalous behaviour' by jealous clergyman, reports Russell Jenkins

A MUSIC teacher yesterday accused a priest of pursuing her for sex in an affair which began when she was vulnerable and alone after the death of her son.

Iris Green, 56, sobbed as told a rare sitting of the church court in Wales how her love for the Reverend Clifford Williams, Rector of Benllech, on the island of Anglesey, turned from adoration to fear as she sought to escape his obsession with her.

She claimed she was only one of a number of women in the small, close-knit, seaside parish that the 49-year-old father of three had seduced, and that he had even boasted about bedding two women at the same time. He would leave copious telephone messages and scrawled notes, in one urging her to "keep Thursday bank free for me".

Later she said that he grew obsessively jealous, began spying and stalking her, breaking into her house to copy intimate letters and diaries. He followed her across the country twice to ruin her attempts to break away and once told her over the telephone he wanted to take her on a drive so he could stop in a lay-by and strangle her.

Mrs Green was giving evidence at a Provincial Court of the Church in Wales. The ecclesiastical court, the equivalent of the Church of England's Consistory Court, last sat in public in 1933. The charges laid by the Bishop of Bangor, the Right Reverend Barry Morgan, that Mr Williams acted in a way that gave "just cause for scandal or offence" have never been heard by the court since its inception in 1920.

If he is found guilty, the way is clear for the bishop to sack him.

Mr Williams, who presided over the parish of Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf with Llanbedrog, faces four charges of scandalous behaviour. It is alleged that between



Clifford Williams: scandal charges

I knew it could not be the first time because everybody who commits adultery agonises and he didn't

May 1990 and September 1996 he committed adultery with Mrs Green in four locations including her home in Tyn-y-Gongl, Anglesey, and a friend's home in Bangor.

He is also accused of engaging in "close relations of improper familiarity" with another married parishioner, Anne Williams, and that he spent excessive hours at her home in Marian-glas. It alleges he engaged in "physical contact" with her on a church trip to the Holy Land "in that he put his arm around her and lay on top of her on a bed".

The other charges, not contested by Mr Williams, allege that the rector led to his bishop over the nature of photographs of the priest and that he disobeyed the bishop's order to stop conducting church services at St Andrew's Church, in Benllech.

In his opening address, Martin Thomas, QC, for the bishop, said the main charges relate to the clergyman's pas-

sionate affair with Mrs Green. "Adultery by a married man living with a wife is always an act of betrayal against her and her children but adultery by a priest cheats the church and those values the church has called for throughout its history," he said.

"It is compounded when the person seduced is a parishioner who is vulnerable and trusting as Iris Green was in this case."

Mrs Green gave her evidence between sobs and tears. She told how, in 1990, she met Mr Williams shortly after she moved to Tyn-y-Gongl, in Gwynedd, when he asked her to help with the church music.

At the time she was mourning the death of her son. As the clergyman's visits increased in frequency, she said: "I told him everything. Sexual things were talked about."

"One day sitting talking on the sofa, he said, 'Do you want me to make love to you?' I could not believe it was happening because of what he was. My words I remember clearly were, 'You can't, you are a vicar. You are married'."

"He said words to the effect that he was also a man. We did make love. I knew almost immediately it could not be the first time because everybody who commits adultery agonises and he didn't. It was just so easy for him."

"Once that had happened, he did it to me once a day, sometimes more than once a day. I loved him. I didn't like committing adultery but I was in the depths and he rescued me. He built my life again. I really felt reborn."

Later, in tears, Mrs Green recalled how he stopped coming to her home so often "when the novelty wore off". She said she became aware from gossip in the village and another woman's confession that she was not the priest's only lover.

She complained bitterly that his car was parked outside the home of Anne Williams,



Iris Green is escorted to court: she said she sought to escape jealous lover

another parishioner, that he almost lived there. She confessed that she had been "more than a bit jealous" because she had given her life "wholly into his hands". By then, she claims, she was divorcing her husband on his advice.

On other occasions, it was Mr Williams who behaved like a jealous and obsessive lover. Once, she told the court,

he walked in on her at her home when she was with another man and stormed out. "He was unbelievably vindictive and brutal," she said.

Twice Mrs Green let her home on short leases and left the county, first to Oswestry and then to Busbury, near Hereford, but Mr Williams tracked her down. Both times, she said they resumed their sexual relationship. "I was in

constant thrall: how much I loved him and believed in him and the rest of the time seeing him with all those other women," she said.

In 1993, Mr Williams's wife, Gwenda, showed her photographs of intimate entries in Mrs Green's diaries.

Mr Williams must have stolen the originals and copied them, Mrs Green said. The hearing continues.

Butcher sold meat 'despite E.coli warning'

By Shirley English

A BUTCHER supplied and cooked meat for an 18th birthday party the day after being warned to stop selling cold meat products because they could pose a danger to health, a court heard yesterday.

John Barr, 52, of Overtown, Lanarkshire, denies "culpably, wilfully and recklessly" supplying cooked meat feared to be contaminated with the life-threatening bacterium *E. coli* O157.

Hamilton Sheriff Court heard that on Friday, November 22, officers of North Lanarkshire Council and Lanarkshire Health Board visited his shop in Caledonian Road, Wishaw, and told Mr Barr to stop selling cooked meat products after a food poisoning outbreak in the area had been linked to his shop.

But the next day Mr Barr is said to have sold a £40 order for a birthday cake and three carrier bags containing 300 slices of cooked ham, roast beef and cooked turkey, to David Moon, 66, of Wishaw, a customer of ten years.

The order was for a buffet for 70 people attending the 18th birthday party of Lauren MacFarlane, the daughter of his niece Fay, that night. However when Mr Moon dropped off the parcels at his niece's home on Saturday morning she told him news reports were warning people not to eat Mr Barr's cooked meat.

"My response was that if there was any doubt about it, I would phone John," Mr Moon said he spoke to a person in the shop, whom he believed was Mr Barr, who assured him the contamination only affected corned beef and chopped ham and pork.

Reassured, Mr Moon went away for the weekend, but on returning home on Sunday he discovered three answer phone messages from Mr Barr made between 6.30 and 7pm the previous night. He phoned back but could get no reply and eventually found Mr Barr at his shop. Mr Moon said that

Mr Barr was distressed and told him that "if at all possible" he should cancel the party. "But by that time it was too late, the party had already taken place."

Later a number of party goers, including Miss MacFarlane, became ill with *E. coli* poisoning.

Under cross examination by George Moore, for Mr Barr, Mr Moon said he had placed the original order with an employee, because Mr Barr had been on holiday. However a few days before the party he went back to the shop and spoke to both Mr Barr, who was back at work, and the employee about the birthday cake, because he had given the



John Barr arrives at court yesterday

wrong spelling of Lauren. He said he did not know if Mr Barr knew that the order included meat. When he picked up the goods from the shop, Mr Barr carried the cake to his car but instructed a boy to bring the bags containing the meat. He also said that although he thought he had spoken to Mr Barr when he rang him to check that the meat was safe, he could not be definite.

He said Mr Barr frequently supplied cut price goods to his branch of the Boys' Brigade and had catered for his ruby wedding anniversary three weeks earlier. The family were so impressed with that buffet that they had asked him to order the meat for Miss MacFarlane's birthday.

The case continues.

Cambridge student falls to his death

By Kathryn Knight

A CAMBRIDGE undergraduate fell 40ft to his death from the roof of an accommodation block only two weeks after beginning his studies at Queens' College.

Jack Davies, an 18-year-old modern languages student, was found dead by a night porter during his patrol of the grounds in the early hours of Sunday. The roof of the four-storey building was surrounded by railings and was used by students as a meeting place. Police are trying to establish whether the fall was an accident or whether he took his own life.

Mr Davies, from Lickfield, Sussex, had studied at Uckfield Community College, where he gained 11 A-grade GCSEs and three A-grade A levels. He was also a skilled composer and performer on the piano and flute.

Yesterday Dr Robin Walker, junior barrister at Queens', said that Mr Davies appeared to have settled in well. "There were no indications that anything was wrong."

Ten-year-old boy 'raped boy of 12'

By Tim Jones

A BOY, aged ten, raped an older boy he had previously befriended at school and then stole his pencil case, a court was told yesterday.

The boy, now aged 11, cannot be identified. He is believed to be the youngest person in Britain to be charged with male rape. His alleged victim was 12.

For much of the proceedings at Nottingham Crown Court, the boy, who was flanked by a male security guard and a female social worker, yawned and stretched his arms. He denies rape on October 7 last year and an alternative charge of indecent assault, as well as the theft of the pencil case and a mathematics set.

Frances Oldham, QC, for the prosecution, said both boys had been pupils at the same primary school but at the time of the alleged attack the victim had moved to a comprehensive school.

The victim, she said, was a slightly built, intelligent boy while the defendant was well built for his age and was bigger and stronger than his victim. She said that after the victim had left a shop where

he had bought sweets, he was grabbed by his attacker who led him to a riverbank.

Mrs Oldham said: "He told him, 'If you say anything I'll kill you' and the victim was terrified." The victim, she said, had every reason to believe his tormentor as he had been bullied by him on several previous occasions.

After carrying out the rape, she said, the victim began to cry before his attacker attempted to assault him again. When passers-by approached, the accused had stuffed leaves into his victim's mouth to prevent him calling out.

The sobbing victim had run home and told his mother what had happened. When interviewed later that day by police, the accused had denied the offence or knowing his victim. Later, he had admitted using threats of violence while stealing the pencil case but had denied any sexual attack took place.

English law requires that in cases involving children aged 10 to 14, the prosecution must prove the child knew the offence to be wrong. The trial continues.

Injuries to au pair trial baby 'were weeks old'

A MEDICAL expert told the Justice Woodward murder trial yesterday that none of the injuries suffered by the baby she was looking after could have been caused by a violent shaking. Dr Jan Leestma also insisted that skull and brain injuries with which nine-month-old Matthew Eappen was admitted to hospital were "weeks old".

The doctor, a leading neuropathologist, was in his second day of evidence as the trial entered its third week in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Woodward, 19, of Elton, near Chester, denies first degree murder.

Questioned by Martha Cookley, the prosecuting attorney, the doctor said he was sure there had been no major injury to the baby's head on February 4 - the day Miss Woodward is alleged to have killed him by shaking him and slamming his head against a hard surface. Dr Leestma said it was a "reasonable working diagnosis" for it to be assumed the baby was a victim of child abuse.

New facts uncovered on Hanratty

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

NEW information has been uncovered in the case of James Hanratty, hanged 35 years ago for the A6 murder and whose family are seeking to clear his name.

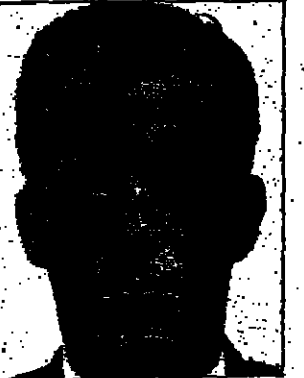
Sir Frederick Crawford, chairman of the Criminal Cases Review Commission, which investigates alleged miscarriages of justice, said that it had "dredged up" important details. He told the Home Affairs Committee of MPs that the commission expects to say within the next few months whether the case should be referred to the Court of Appeal.

Hanratty was convicted of murdering Michael Gregsten, 36, who was shot dead on August 22, 1961, after being disturbed in a cinema near the Theatre at Dorsey Reach,

Berkshire, during a tryst with his lover, Valerie Storie. The gunman forced the couple to drive to Deadman's Hill, south of Bedford, where he killed Mr Gregsten.

Miss Storie, 22, was raped, shot and left for dead. She survived, paralysed from the waist down, and gave evidence against Hanratty. Campaigners claim that her evidence, based largely on her memory of the tone of voice used by the killer, before he shot her, would not now be accepted by a court.

Sir Frederick told the MPs that since the commission started working on cases in March, it had been making a "very intensive effort" on the Hanratty case. As well as studying two filing cabinets of evidence, case workers had



Hanratty: hanged for the A6 murder of 1961

been "dredging up a lot of information not found previously". During questioning by MPs, under the chairmanship of Chris Mullin, Labour MP for Sunderland, Sir Frederick agreed that he had not declared he was a Mason

when interviewed for his £38,000-a-year post. He said that he believed it was sufficient that commission members should be obliged to declare a conflict of interest, and if necessary withdraw, if they were involved in reviewing a case involving another Mason.

Mr Mullin, who was heavily involved in the campaign to clear the Birmingham Six, said that there had been many Masons involved in "obstructing the truth" in that case.

When he had learnt that Sir Frederick, who was a Birmingham Mason, had been appointed chairman of the commission, it had "set alarm bells ringing", although he stressed he was not questioning his integrity.

Sir Frederick said: "There is a lot of unjustified paranoia about Freemasonry."

In the first half of 1997, more people chose the Virgin Growth PEP than any other PEP product.

If you want straight talking we're Virgin Direct.

direct

0345 900 900

Open seven days a week from 9am to 10pm

Virgin Direct Personal Financial Service Ltd is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority. The price of units and any income from them can go down as well as up. You may not get back the amount you invest. The basis of tax may change. The value of tax benefits depends on how much tax you pay. For your security, all calls will be recorded and randomly monitored. The July 1997 budget confirmed that the tax free status of PEPs will continue until April 1999, after which it will be subject to statutory change.



Annetta Padmore: derailment at school escalated

Teacher's cheat gibe caused chaos in class

A PRIMARY school descended into chaos after one group of 11-year-olds set upon a rival class over claims of cheating in government tests of the children's reading ability, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

The breakdown of classroom discipline at Heber Road Primary School in Dulwich, South London, came after Vicky Sawyer, a teacher, alleged that her colleague Stella Arinze had shown pupils an advance copy of the test paper. Children from the two classes started calling each other names and fighting over the claims of cheating, the tribunal in Croydon, South London, was told.

Miss Sawyer, from Lewisham in southeast London, is claiming unfair dismissal and race discrimination against Southwark Council.

Annetta Padmore, the school's head teacher, told the hearing that the disruption by pupils in the two classes had "hallooned" when Miss Sawyer made her claims

Order collapsed when pupils heard allegations, reports David Charter

about cheating involving the other class.

"The derailment of Heber escalated," Mrs Padmore said. "The children in Miss Sawyer's class accused Mrs Arinze's class of being cheats. This resulted in a breakdown in discipline. The allegation caused arguments between the children and name-calling that reduced some of the children to tears."

Publicity in a local newspaper and on television had contributed to the "destabilisation of the school", the head teacher said.

Mrs Padmore launched an investigation with the local education authority but found no evidence that Mrs Arinze had cheated in the reading tests for ten and 11-year-olds held in 1995. However, the problems grew worse, the tribunal was told, as Miss Sawyer lodged grievances

against Mrs Arinze and Mrs Padmore.

Mrs Padmore, who was giving evidence on the fifth day of the hearing, denied claims that she had conspired with school governors and education chiefs to get rid of Miss Sawyer. The head teacher said that she had experienced continuous problems with Miss Sawyer ever since she took over the leadership of the school in September 1995.

At the first meeting between the two women, she said that Miss Sawyer had introduced herself, saying: "You know I am the teacher who got rid of the previous head."

The situation grew worse after Miss Sawyer had told the head teacher about her allegation of cheating. Mrs Padmore gave her a verbal warning after discovering that she had rifled through

her colleague's classroom looking for the test papers.

Under cross-examination, Mrs Padmore denied victimising Miss Sawyer, asking members of staff to spy on her and manufacturing evidence to discredit her.

Miss Sawyer claimed that the head teacher conspired to remove her from the school because she had been so angry about the complaint. "If I hadn't made an allegation I would never have been dismissed," Miss Sawyer said.

Mrs Padmore said: "I deny that I was angry. I had no objection to Miss Sawyer stating a complaint. My concern was that by the time she came to inform me she had already carried out her own investigation. I was not angry because of the cheating. I had no evidence as to whether anything untoward had happened or not at that stage."

Mrs Padmore said that Mrs Arinze had been "completely upset and shattered" by the allegation of cheating. The hearing continues.



Vicky Sawyer: said tests had been shown round

Pupils ask court to make council repair school

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

TWO pupils at a comprehensive school launched a landmark case against their local authority yesterday in an attempt to force councillors to sanction £2 million of repairs.

Rod Salisbury, 16, and Simon Worthington, 14, made a video of dilapidated conditions at Childwall community comprehensive's three sites in Liverpool. It showed leaking roofs, rotten window frames, loose tiles, blocked gutters and potholes in the grounds.

The two teenagers brought the case with their parent-governor fathers under the 1990 Environmental Protection Act. The outcome is being watched closely by other schools and local authorities.

Rod Salisbury, a sixth-former, told David Tapp, the stipendiary magistrate, that some classrooms were in such a poor state of repair that they were out of bounds to pupils. When it rained, teachers had to stand in a puddle of water to use a blackboard.

Even GCSE choices were affected by the poor state of some buildings. Questioned about the school's art annex,

he said: "I could have chosen art for GCSE, but I didn't because of the condition."

Barristers representing the boys say the state of disrepair at the school is prejudicial to the health of staff, students, governors and visitors. The local authority has conceded that repairs are required but denies that the problems are prejudicial to health.

Simon Worthington, aged 14, said that the gym had an uneven floor and dangerous wallbars, which he was told to keep away from in case they fell on him. Outside, the playground was a "moon-scape" of pot-holes and broken paving slabs.

Tim Straker QC, defending, said: "Do you think it would be fair for me to suggest that you might be exaggerating the state of your school, in order to produce the message that it's all pretty terrible?" He replied: "Maybe a tiny bit. Every 14-year-old exaggerates." If the court rules in favour of the families, the magistrate can order that the nuisance be abated. The case continues.



Simon Worthington, left, and Rod Salisbury

Who's delivered *high returns* and *low charges*?

An open and shut case for Legal & General's UK Tracker PEP.

Whose All-Share Index Tracking PEP has produced impressive results that have consistently outperformed other PEPs tracking this index? Who else could have turned £6,000 into £8,526* in just 22 months? Whose PEP offers an investment tracking the All-Share Index for no initial charge, no exit charge and an annual management charge of only 0.5%? And who else has been successfully helping people make the most of their money over 160 years, managing in excess of £54 billion as at June 1997? The answer, of course, is Legal & General.

0500 11 66 22

LINES OPEN 9am TO 8pm WEEKDAYS and 9am TO 5pm WEEKENDS. PLEASE QUOTE REF: GNB
For your protection calls will usually be recorded and monitored. <http://www.legal-and-general.co.uk>

Legal & General

trust us to deliver

STOP!

Are you about to break the law by copying from this newspaper?

Under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, generally it is unlawful to reproduce articles from newspapers without permission even if only for internal management purposes. To make copies legally, your organisation must get a licence from the Newspaper Licensing Agency - set up to help you comply with the law quickly and easily.

You can obtain details of the licensing scheme and an application form by sending for a booklet. For your copy, simply contact the Newspaper Licensing Agency at Lonsdale Gate, Lonsdale Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN11 1NL or telephone 01892 525273, fax 01892 525275, email copy@nla.co.uk.



*Source: L&G's own offer to fund based on all UK PEPs tracking the All-Share Index, ranked from 11.19% to 15.97%. Past performance is not a guide to future performance. From 06.01.99 tax credits will no longer be able to be reclaimed by PEPs investing in equity based unit trusts. Both capital and income will be subject to tax as well as capital gains tax. All investments are subject to market risk and are subject to change. The value of tax relief will depend on your individual circumstances. All comparisons of cost apply to PEPs tracking the All-Share Index. Full terms and conditions are available on request. All statements are correct as at 15.09.97. In the 1997 Budget the Government announced its intention to limit the tax relief available on PEPs from April 1998 to build upon the experience of PEPs and TFSAs. However, there is no indication of when this will happen. Legal & General (Life) Limited, Registered in England No. 2712046. Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4A 3DF. Representative units of the Legal & General marketing group, members of which are regulated by the Financial Services Authority and provide the services of recommending, advising on and selling life assurance and investment products bearing Legal & General's name.

The 'sporting' drink with 19 spoons of sugar

DRINKS that claim to put the fizzy back into exhausted athletes were yesterday branded a sham. Many were little more than expensive, sugar-laden soft drinks, the Food Commission said.

The report in the pressure group's *Food Magazine* examined 22 drinks often sold with the promise that they will restore energy levels or rapidly replace fluids lost during exercise. They cost an average of £1.50 each and are promoted as diet supplements, or as part of a training programme.

Sports drinks represent about 1.5 per cent of the total soft drinks market in Britain. Almost all were high in sugar: one service of Carbo Cooler from the Sport Beverage company contained 19 level teaspoons of sugar. Only five of the 22 actually stated how much sugar they contained, while many listed sugar simply as "carbohydrate" — technically correct, but potentially misleading as complex carbohydrates such as pasta and potatoes are nutritionally distinct from sugars.

Lucozade Energy and Purvey's Gold High Energy contained the most sugar, at 18 per cent, followed by Carbo Cooler (16 per cent), High Carb and Mars (13 per cent) and Nutrament (12.8 per cent). Next were Carbo Power, Hi Energy and Ultra Fuel (all 12) and then Dunn's River Nourishment Light (11.5), Red Bull Stimulation (11) and Hype Energy mfp, Lipovitan B3 and Power Horse (all 10 per cent). Even when products con-

Nigel Hawkes reports on the health boosts that may be no match for the humble banana

tained some complex carbohydrate, it was mainly maltodextrin, a compound halfway between sugar and starch. The report says: "One product, Energy Source, claimed three servings would supply the user with 'more carbohydrate than 2½ large tins of spaghetti, without the bulk', giving the impression that the product contains the kind of starches found in spaghetti. We believe this could be misleading, as the carbohydrate in the product comes from maltodextrin and sugar."

Caffeine is found in eight out of the 22 drinks, at levels up to three times higher than in traditional colas. Though this is not unhealthy, neither is it likely to do much good, the commission claims. Caffeine encourages fluid loss.

Other components included vitamins, minerals, herbs and taurine (an amino acid). Taurine is described by the makers of Red Bull as an "energy transmitter", a claim the commission says is meaningless. No particular claims are made for the herbs. There was no

evidence that any of these could improve athletic performance, the commission said.

Sue Dibb, for the Food Commission, said: "Sports dieticians do not recommend high-energy drinks as a regular part of the diet of someone training or doing sport recreationally. For extra energy, a banana is healthier."

A spokeswoman for the British Soft Drinks Federation said that the commission had caused confusion by grouping together a wide range of drinks with different purposes. Some did contain sugar, but this was no bad thing: "Breast milk contains 7 per cent sugar," she said. "The key is balance. As for cost, consumers are not fools. If a drink is too expensive, they won't buy it. And all contents of soft drinks have to adhere to strict regulations."

Olympic champion 'will beat diabetes'

By Nigel Hawkes
SCIENCE EDITOR

STEVE REDGRAVE, four times winner of an Olympic gold medal, has been found to be suffering from diabetes. He remains determined to compete for his fifth gold at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, and other members of the crew of the men's coxed fours have given him their full support.

Redgrave, 35, learnt of the problem shortly after he returned from a holiday following last month's world championships in France, where his crew won the gold.

His coach, Jürgen Grobler, said: "It is the most stressful time for him. It is his aim to carry on. That is why he was so disappointed after he found out what was going on with him. I know that in other sports, and also in rowing, there are people with the same problem. Every



Steve Redgrave in action: "Every person is different — there is a big learning process," his coach said

person is different. There is a big learning process. In discussions, we have said that his health is the priority. Nobody is putting him under pressure to carry on."

Among other diabetic sportsmen are the footballers Gary Mabbutt of Tottenham Hotspur and Alan Kernaghan of Manchester City,

and the cricketers Andrew Brown of Derbyshire and Andy Moles of Warwickshire. The jockey Jonathan Lower has the disease, and the Jockey Club is considering whether he should continue riding.

The causes of diabetes remain obscure, but there is thought to be a combination

between genetic predisposition and some environmental agent, possibly a virus. Athletes at their peak are known to be prone to viral infections. Redgrave has the advantage that his wife, Ann, a former international rower, is a doctor who looks after the British rowing squad.

Diabetes has two forms:

insulin-dependent diabetes, which generally starts in childhood and requires daily injections; and non insulin-dependent diabetes, which usually arises after the age of 40. It has not been made clear which of these Redgrave is suffering, though he has confirmed that he is taking insulin.

Fry angers students with drug defence

By David Charter, Education Correspondent

DUNDEE University has dissociated itself from remarks made by its Rector, the actor and writer Stephen Fry, after he defended his use of Ecstasy by saying "one should try everything once". The university has a "strong anti-drugs policy and regularly conducts random searches of students for drugs."

Mr Fry told *Neon* magazine that the drug made him feel uncharacteristically "touchy-feely". He added: "One should try everything once, except incest and country dancing — as somebody once said."

Mr Fry said he experimented with Ecstasy at a party. "I was surprised to see it lives up to the name — Ecstasy, which means to stand outside one-

self — 'ecstasy'." In a joint statement, the University and Students' Association said: "Mr Fry's opinions are not opinions which are held within the Students' Association or the University. Ecstasy is a dangerous and illegal drug."

Mr Fry was elected Rector in 1995 and steps down next year at the end of his second three-year term. The Dundee Drug Prevention Team, which works with students and young people to prevent them from taking drugs, called for Mr Fry's resignation. Rita Keyte, the team leader said: "He ought to be considering his position as University Rector because his comments are in direct opposition to the university policy on drugs."

Every day Siebe appliance controls are turned down by the world's master chefs.



At work in almost every corner of the world there's a British engineering company called Siebe. Our appliance controls turn up in more cookers, freezers and fridges than any other manufacturers'.



But beyond the world's kitchens, our innovations stretch from automated factories to air compressors and from semiconductors to safety equipment. And we're always in the most important place of all. The lead.

SIEBE THE ENGINEER. HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE.

Siebe plc, Saxon House, 2-4 Victoria Street, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 1EN, England. Tel. 01753 855411.

The COOPERATIVE BANK

Down with Debt!

7.9% APR

Guaranteed until April '98

UK's lowest standard rate*

No annual fee

Just 10.9% APR variable from April '98

Keep your credit limit

No need to bank with us

0800 00 79 79

*Credit facilities are subject to credit checks and are available on request. Information provided will be passed to a credit reference agency for credit assessment. A copy of the credit report will be sent to you. Figures are 20% of your credit limit. There is no interest free period. Repay by 10.9% APR. *Cooperative Bank's standard credit card rate is 12.9% APR. Repay by 10.9% APR.

Blunders lead to reform of smear testing

THE national cervical smear test programme is to be restructured after the publication yesterday of a report that details serious failings in the way the service operated at one hospital.

Instead of laboratories competing to carry out the tests, thus earning money from the programme, the eight regional health boards are to be put in overall charge of the programme in their areas, co-ordinating the management of the national programme. Quality control and training of laboratory staff will have to meet national standards.

The changes follow the publication yesterday of an independent inquiry into what went wrong with the service at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital from 1990 to 1995. Five women who were given the all clear died from cervical cancer and dozens more have needed hysterectomies or radiation treatment.

The report is likely to lead to a wider review of screening for women's cancers. Baroness Jay, the Health Minister who set up the inquiry, said it would be considered nationally alongside two reports into breast cancer services to be published shortly.

The Kent and Canterbury inquiry uncovered bad management, understaffing, poor training and a breakdown in relationships between senior consultants and laboratory staff. Matters were made worse by the introduction of the internal market into the

Five women given the all-clear died; 333 were found to be at high risk of cancer, reports

Ian Murray

NHS, which led to secrecy and a fragmentation of the service. When internal checks at the hospital at last recognised that something was wrong, it was necessary to look again at 91,000 tests taken over the six years. The review found that 333 women had been given the all clear when they had a high level of risk of cancer; a further 1,800 women showed a medium level of abnormality.

One outside laboratory re-



Sir William: critical of the internal market

testing the smears found that Kent and Canterbury managed to pick up only 41 per cent of those with high-grade abnormalities, compared with a national average of 85 to 95 per cent.

"This was due to a catalogue of managerial and clinical failings which resulted in unacceptable failings," said Sir William Wells, chairman of the South Thames NHS Executive, who led the inquiry panel. "There are no excuses and everybody involved was to a greater or lesser extent responsible."

"There was poor and confused management of the hospital trust and cytology laboratory, warnings repeatedly ignored, poor training, low morale, a breakdown in relationships at all levels including consultants, and an apparent lack of interest by clinicians involved."

In a covering letter to Baroness Jay, Sir William says he was struck by the different ways in which the introduction of the internal market meant there was an "overall lack of clear accountability for the national programme."

"Many of the decisions which had an adverse effect on the cytology department were made (or not as the case may be) because of the perceived need to be free standing and competitive in the newly created market."

Sir William said restoring credibility to the national cervical screening programme was a main aim of the report.



Helen Palmer: "I needed a hysterectomy to save my life... I can't understand how they can deny responsibility"

Women still waiting for apologies

BY OUR MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

HELEN PALMER has just received a letter from the trust denying any responsibility for having failed to spot an abnormality in the two tests she had in 1989 and 1990.

"When they were retested in 1995 they were found to show serious abnormalities," she said. "I needed a radical hysterectomy to save my life and I cannot understand how they can deny responsibility."

Mrs Palmer, 35, of Whitstable, has two children, aged 3 and 5, who were both born while the tumour was growing. "I wasn't ill, but when I look back on it I am terrified about what might have happened."

Julie Graves, 41, of Faver-

sham, is one of the 28 women for whose inaccurate test results the Kent and Canterbury Hospitals NHS Trust has accepted responsibility. She was cleared after tests in 1985, 1987 and 1992 and was never recalled. A review showed abnormalities in all the tests.

"I can't see why my case is different from Helen's," she said. "If they were responsible for failing to spot abnormalities with me, they must be responsible for her."

For 20 years Jane Newport, 38, took care to have regular smear tests. In January of last year she went to her GP because she was worried that her periods had become irregular. He reminded her that it

was five years since her last test and said it was time for another one. The result showed an abnormality.

Mrs Newport, who lives in Ashley with her husband and three children, had to wait until April for an appointment with a specialist at Bucklands Hospital in Dover. He told her that there had been two abnormal test results and she should have a colposcopy, an examination of the cervix. "He told me that one test had been carried out at Liverpool and I couldn't understand that, because I had never been there."

She had heard about problems with smear tests at Kent and Canterbury but assumed

she was safe because she was never recalled. After her colposcopy, the specialist recommended a hysterectomy.

Her GP subsequently told her that her 1990 test result had been misinterpreted by the Kent and Canterbury, and found to be abnormal after a review at Liverpool.

"The apology from my GP was the only one I ever received," Mrs Newport said. "Kent and Canterbury never recalled or contacted me and their attitude is quite appalling. I learnt later that my last three tests had all shown abnormalities. If my test in 1985 had been read properly I could have easily been cured with a very minor treatment."

Four primary screeners from Canterbury transferred to the William Harvey Hospital. One left after a short time and the other three will do no screening unless they are retrained and pass the national Certificate in Cervical Cytology Examination.

Edward Pearson, the Canterbury hospital chief executive, and James Bird, the trust's chairman, have both resigned. Jo Hawkes, chairman of East Kent Health Authority, said: "Our hearts go out to the women involved and their families. We have taken swift steps to ensure the mistakes that were made could never happen again."

This is not over, says Cabinet minister's sister who led legal fight

BY OUR MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

SARAH HARMAN, the solicitor who led the campaign for an inquiry into the Kent and Canterbury Hospital cervical smear programme, became involved because she was one of the women who was told in February last year that she was going to be retested.

"I rang up the helpline number and I wasn't at all happy about the way I was treated," she said yesterday. "I asked questions like how long it would take, and when

the testing would start. They didn't seem to know. I got the impression they had been jumped into opening the helpline before they were ready because they knew the press was inquiring into the case."

Ms Harman, 49 — elder sister of Harriet Harman, the Social Security Secretary — gave a short interview to a local newspaper about her concerns. Other women began getting in touch with her, saying they had found the same thing, she said. "I found myself in the role of both lawyer and counsel-

lor, because the hospital was providing nothing in the way of reassurance. They could have minimised the concern because, in the majority of these cases, women can go for a long time with a cancerous growth and still be cured. All they did was try to obscure the issue, which meant that GPs surgeries were invaded by frightened, angry women demanding answers."

She said the trust issued a press notice saying that everyone would be re-screened by June, but that never happened and the women

could not find out what was going on. "Into this vacuum walked panic and fear. I originally had six women who wanted me to represent them against the hospital — and I thought that was enormous — but as the case attracted more publicity, more and more got in touch."

Pressure from her and her clients led to the hospital's internal inquiry, which was published in an abridged form last February. "I thought that the attitude it showed was outrageous," Ms Harman said. "It spoke of only five hysterectomies, but I

knew by then there were 15. If it hadn't been for the women themselves pressing on, demanding something better, nothing would have happened. When the new Government was elected, I wrote to Frank Dobson as soon as he was appointed Health Secretary."

Because of her sister, she may have been able to command attention more quickly than other solicitors. With three weeks, Baroness Jay, the Health Minister, announced the inquiry into the screening. "I am very happy with the

report, which means we can move forward into the future with confidence," Ms Harman said. "But that doesn't mean we should allow the trust to sweep the past under the carpet."

"I have been contacted by over 70 women or their families so far. Some have died. Some have lost their fertility through radiotherapy or a hysterectomy. Many have suffered anxiety and trauma. The hospital has accepted responsibility for 28 of the cases so far. Their attitude continues to be outrageous."



Harman: angered by personal experience

Unisys knows it takes two things to run an airline.

One of them is planes.

The other is information. Because no plane would ever leave the hangar without it. And helping clients manage information — not just process it — is what Unisys does best. That's why Unisys is the choice of the world's most intensive users of information — including

14 of the top 20 airlines. Airlines using our systems ship over one-third of the world's cargo. And our consultants help people with everything from designing customer loyalty programmes to integrating global databases. It's all part of information management —

our way of helping you use information as an asset to gain competitive advantage. When it takes information to run your business, it takes Unisys to help you run it better. <http://www.unisys.com> or phone Tony Locke on 01908 212613, fax 01908 212952.

UNISYS

When information is everything.

THE TIMES TUESDAY OCTOBER 21 1997

Inquiry at diving centre after 17 die in 15 years

SAFETY inquiries which could affect the future of a national scuba diving centre have been launched after the 17th death there in 15 years. The latest fatality was the fourth involving an inexperienced diver in six months.

A police report into the death of forklift driver Claude Man, 28, who died while diving in thick fog at Stoney Cove National Inland Diving Centre near Hincley on Sunday, will be sent to the Leicester coroner. An inspector from the Health & Safety Executive visited the centre to determine the HSE's jurisdiction in the case and spoke to police diving experts yesterday amid concern about the security of novice divers.

The centre was involved in controversy earlier this month when Patrick Scanlon, 37, from Leicester, drowned. An inquiry by *The Times* into training standards found growing criticism by police underwater experts of new fast-track preparation for divers. This involves five-day intensive courses which allow beginners to dive unsupervised after only four sessions with instructors.

Mr Man, from Tottenham, North London, who held the basic Open Water Diving Certificate from the Profes-

Coroner will get report on latest death at scuba lake,

reports Michael Horsnell

Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) is believed to have drowned at the former granite quarry while under the care of a more experienced rescue diver. Police interviewed the rescue diver, who had raised the alarm, and staged a partial reconstruction to test whether rescue facilities were working efficiently.

Among issues the coroner will want to establish are why diving was permitted in the 36-metre deep lake when visibility was down to only 10 metres, making it impossible for the rescue boat to be launched because of the danger to other divers and whether Mr Man dived deeper than the 18 metres which his certificate allowed.

He was unknown at the centre and would have merely paid his £5 fee for access to the

lake. Margaret Baldwin, spokeswoman for the centre, said: "We don't know if he was a regular visitor. We have something like 50 dive schools who use our facilities for training. The fog and poor visibility does not have any impact on safety, and it certainly had no impact on this incident."

"I can't put into words what we are feeling here. We are just so concerned, so worried, so distraught. We are doing all we can to ensure the safety of our site and the safety of our sport."

Jan Forster, director of the two other national diving centres — at Gildenhurst Water, near Peterborough, and Dosthill Quarry, at Tamworth, Staffordshire — questioned the circumstances in which Mr Man perished. He had 10 diving instructor candidates taking their tests before emergency from PADI at Stoney Cove on Sunday.

Because of the fog danger, he allowed candidates to venture no further than 10 metres from the shore. He said: "There was no public announcement to warn divers not to dive away from the shoreline because of the very poor visibility."

"A lot of shouting for help was heard when the diver got into difficulties but no one could see anything or hear where it was coming from because the walls of the quarry trap the echo. And the boat could not go out in the conditions because of the danger to other divers."

Mark Caney, managing director of PADI, said: "So-called fast-track training for divers is not a new thing. It is well tested. If you look at the fact there have now been 17 deaths at Stoney Cove it may sound a lot but not when you consider that there have been millions of dives. Stoney Cove may be a statistical anomaly. Fifty per cent of training takes place there."

Cardin's heir keeps faith with the old master

PIERRE CARDIN'S "Evolution" line by Sergio Altieri, shown yesterday in his Paris art gallery-theatre complex, should be a solid hit, featuring as it does high quality design and workmanship.

This was not the last of the spring 1998 ready-to-wear shows, as some lesser names are still striving to be seen. But Cardin's show serves as a fitting finale — true fashion served up as such, rather than spectacle or hype. In fact, Cardin was not even there during the show, arriving backstage after the runway lights dimmed. "I wanted to keep the spotlight on my spiritual heir. He's been learning from me for 15 years, after all," Cardin said.

At 75, Cardin is easing into retirement, with a fortune made in costume and licences since his own house opened in 1950. His Italian-born designer, who has shown for several seasons, did a great job of mixing modernity with Cardin nostalgia.

The show climaxed in sunny evening clothes. Their look of layered, hooped lampshades in shades of coral and bright green were dead ringers for the glory days of Cardin. Other familiar details cropped up in the handsome, upstanding stiffened neck ruffles, looking like flowers, or the knotted long pascals on the sleeves of a short black cocktail gown with a couple of rhinestone stripes at bodice and hip. Other slinky black crepe numbers had voluptuous Joan Collins or Dolly Parton appeal as a bra feature was incorporated right into the deep-V décolletés.

Cardin daywear made a serious statement in subtle shades of beige, linden or Nile green, clay or silvery grey, for light new fabrics. Many outfits sported the latest loose and fluid looks, here looking more Altieri than Cardin. Flowy shirtlike



Signature neck ruffle tops green chiffon dress patterned with blue and yellow prints

jackets, or loose trapeze toppers in hazy pastels were paired with soft but tufted off-white wool pants cut on the bias, giving the collection up-to-the-minute chic. Jump-suits, too, were handsome, and more tailored with diagonally buttoned jackets or neat boleros over check pants.

The distinctively structured look Cardin himself did so

well was echoed nicely in short-sleeved jackets with upturned "pagoda-sleeve" shoulder emphasis. Many long jackets without lapels are fastened by a single metal bar like a well-placed piece of sculpture.

Asymmetry in handkerchief dresses and some of the standout sleeves with geometric shapes on bright purple

coats also brought back the good old days of Cardin, yet looked wearable today by an elegant woman.

As young talents are striving for revolutionary modes to greet the millennium, it is nice to know that the once-revolutionary Cardin shapes still look good and that a great creator's works never really wear out. (AP)

Move to silence church bells hits sour note

By PAUL WILKINSON

A COUNTRY house hotel dropped a clanger with villagers when it tried to silence the bells of their parish church.

Nidd Hall hotel in North Yorkshire suggested that, so as not to disturb sleeping guests, the chimes should be suppressed between 11pm and 7am. But the owners of the former stately home reckoned without the people of Nidd, near Knaresborough, where the bells have pealed every hour since the church was built in 1865. Residents are being urged to vote against the idea in a plebiscite being organised on behalf of Warner Holidays by Lord Mountgarret, whose family once occupied the house.

Alan Clapham, the parish council chairman, said it was a "bit rich" for Warner to try to change an aspect of village life that had existed for generations. "They seem to have upset quite a lot of people, especially those living nearest the church," he said.

Warner is spending £8 million converting the hall into an adults-only playground with pool, gym, tennis courts and other leisure facilities. But the suggestion that the company pay for an electronic suppressor on the clock has struck a sour note, although Lord Mountgarret, former president of Yorkshire Cricket Club and chairman of the parochial church council, is determined to stay neutral on the matter. So is Nidd's vicar, the Rev Kenneth Tibbo, who said: "The hotel has a point. They have up to 360 residents not used to the bells, which could disturb them."

Joe Stenson, general manager at the hotel, said that, before it was closed for refurbishment, a number of guests had complained of being kept awake by the church clock. "I anticipate a number of customer complaints from guests in accommodation close to the church."

Even mother nature gives herself a break every year, don't you deserve the same when paying your mortgage?



Christmas and summer holidays are times when you could also do with a holiday from your mortgage. And yet most mortgages expect you to make the same payments month in, month out, regardless of your cash flow. Our new Options Mortgage™ allows you up to two months break every year by spreading the payments over 10 months instead of 12. All this without penalty and at a competitive variable rate. Being able to take a holiday is so important. To change the way you pay your mortgage simply call us free on the number below. Please quote ref M915.

FREEPHONE 0500 700 600

SAINSBURY'S BANK
FRESH BANKING™ FROM SAINSBURY'S

OUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT. The following example is based on a property value of £100,000 with a £50,000 interest only mortgage over a 25 year term at 7.45% GRDES. Normal gross monthly payments amount to £372.50 per month. With a two month gap in payments, the amount payable is £447 per month. Options Mortgage and Fresh Banking are trademarks of Sainsbury's Bank plc. Details of our mortgage and a written Consumer Credit Quotation are available from Sainsbury's Bank plc, York House, 41 South Quay, London, E17 2LH. You must be aged 18 or over to apply. Subject to status. The Bank requires security over the property, an acceptable Life Insurance Policy and Household Contents Insurance for replacement value. Sainsbury's Bank plc is a Representative only of SAINSBURY'S LIFE, which is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority for life insurance, pensions and unit trust business. Sainsbury's Bank plc is regulated by all of these products. Options Mortgage is available in the UK, with the exception of Northern Ireland. Telephone calls may be monitored or recorded. Sainsbury's Bank plc is authorised by the Banking Code and adheres to the Code of Mortgage Lending Practice. Copies of these codes are available on request. Variable interest rate of 7.45% (TYPICAL APR 7.45%) on loans up to 75% of the value of your property and a variable interest rate of 7.5% (TYPICAL APR 8.5%) for loans between 75% and 95% of the value of your property. For example a £50,000 interest only mortgage over 25 years on a property valued at £100,000 would have interest charged at Sainsbury's Bank Options Mortgage rate currently 7.45% APR 7.45% and 300 gross monthly payments of £372.50 (net monthly payments of £344.50). Net monthly payments show the benefit of tax relief at 15% under the MARS scheme. At the end of the 25 years £50,000 is payable. The total amount payable is £112,515 (this example includes an estimated service fee of £150, legal fees of £500 and an electronic funds transfer fee of £15). The cost of any life policies has not been included in the above example. An additional 0.45% is added to the above annual rate of interest if the mortgage amount is more than 75% of the property valuation. A higher loan to value fee is also payable. *MARS has been calculated under current tax legislation and may also

Literacy targets are reduced for poorer schools

By DAVID CHARTER
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

LITERACY targets for children from the poorest performing areas were relaxed yesterday, but ministers said that they would not allow poverty to excuse long-term failure.

Areas where low numbers of 11-year-olds currently reach expected levels in English tests will have to succeed with 70 per cent of children by 2002, compared with the national target of 80 per cent. Those already near 80 per cent are being encouraged to aim for 90 per cent so that the national target can be hit.

All 13 education authorities in England and Wales were given their suggested target yesterday, to be agreed with the Department for Education and Employment and published by Christmas. Authorities must then spend the spring term agreeing goals for individual primary schools, which will also be published.

Stephen Byers, Minister for School Standards, said the 70 per cent minimum would still require the lowest-achieving areas to make the fastest rate of improvement in the next five years. The 2002 targets were a "staging post" towards higher standards in the following five years.

In this summer's English

The fee system should be used as a lever to force Oxford and Cambridge colleges to take more state pupils, Anne Campbell, Labour MP for Cambridge, has urged. The colleges, which at present get £35 million a year for their own facilities and a system of individual tuition, could have grants cut if they failed to meet recruitment targets.

Leading article, page 21

tests for 11-year-olds, a little more than 50 per cent of children reached the Government's target, which is level four of the national curriculum. "There will be many local authorities who will be critical of having to get to 70 per cent, for example those in the forties at the moment," Mr Byers said. "But this is not the end of the process, these are the standards for this Parliament. Each local authority will have to go beyond 70 per cent after 2002."

Mr Byers said the annual improvements expected from authorities ranged from 2.2 per cent to 5.5 per cent. However, representatives from Coventry City Council were surprised to find out that their suggested target seemed above this level, whereas in Richmond-upon-Thames, a

high-achieving southwest London borough, the annual increase was projected at 2.2 per cent.

Dave Edwards, chairman of education in Coventry, said: "Raising standards is our No 1 priority, but targets have to be realistic and achievable so we will be getting into to some hard-nosed discussions with the Department for Education officials as soon as possible."

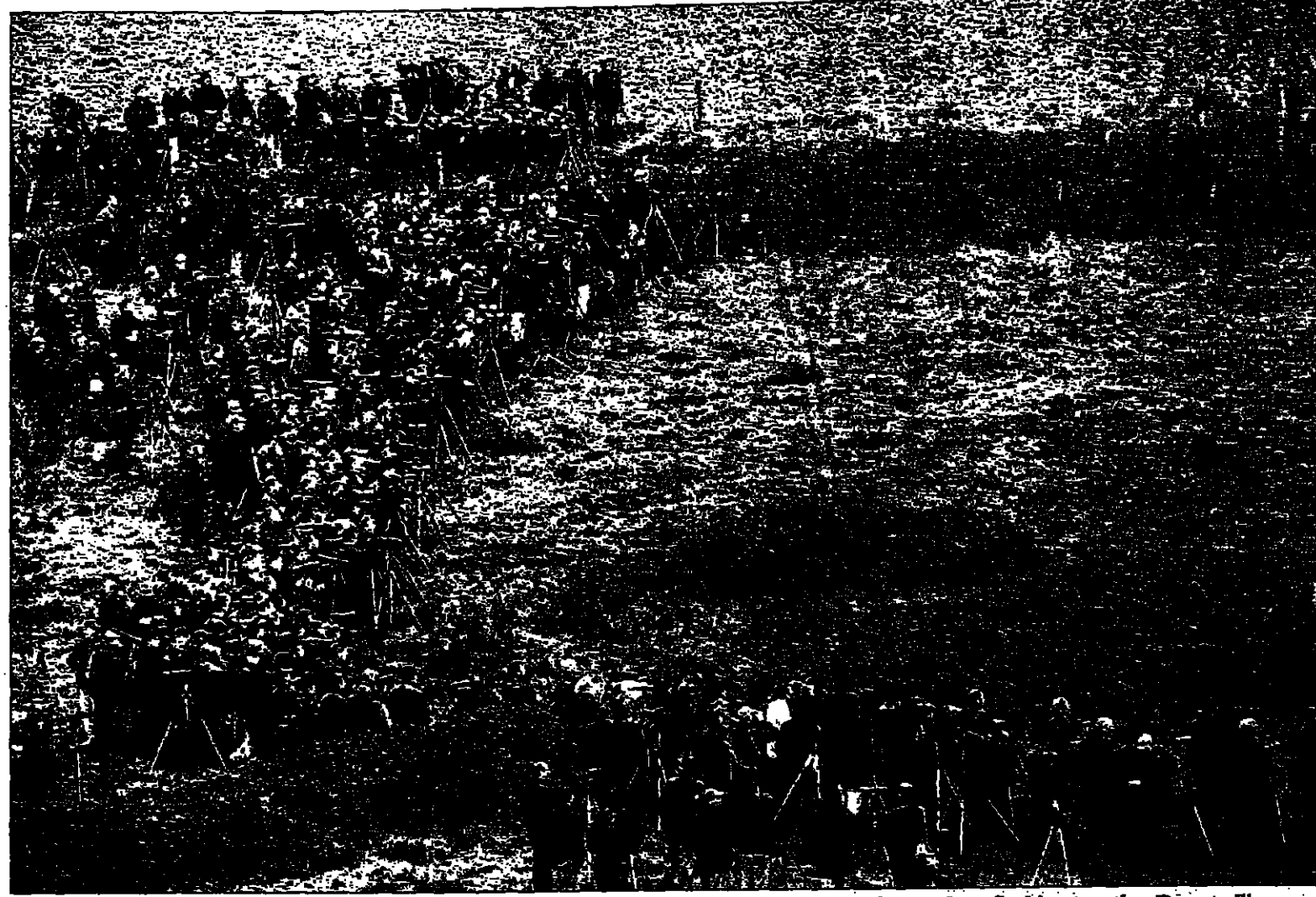
The number of free school meals provided by each local authority, an indicator of poverty, would not be acceptable as an excuse for low standards, Mr Byers said. Instead it would be used as a guide for investment.

"Children from poor backgrounds are not less able or less bright, but all too often there has been a lack of ambition from teachers, local authorities and government," he said.

Extra money for low-achieving schools would come from the £50 million fund announced by Tony Blair at the Labour Party conference for books and training for teachers.

Graham Lane, education chairman of the Local Government Association and of Newham council in East London said he was "delighted to have been given targets to aim at".

Libby Purves, page 20



Flying south: news of the arrival of the Siberian rubythroat, below, brought hundreds of birdwatchers flocking to a tiny Dorset village



Siberian beauty misses photo call

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

A TINY Dorset village was under siege yesterday as birdwatchers from all over Britain flocked to see a rare song bird from Siberia. More than 1,000 twitches, armed with cameras and telescopes, descended

on the seaside village of Osmington Mills, near Weymouth, after word spread of the first British sighting of the male Siberian rubythroat.

The hundreds who drove through the night were, however, disappointed. The hordes whose cars were already blocking the narrow country lanes around the field where the bird was seen appeared to have stared it away.

John Dunn, one of those who managed to catch sight of the robin-like bird, said: "I saw it hiding in the grass. The bird is a male with a beautiful red throat. It's absolutely gorgeous."

The bird, *Latia name lucina calliope*, was spotted by a local ornithologist and word spread quickly on the twitches' grapevine. Chris Rice, landlord of the Smugglers Inn in Osmington Mills, said: "I went out to get some papers on Sunday afternoon and it was all quiet. When I

came back half an hour later the lane was completely blocked with cars. It took me 30 minutes to drive a mile and a half. I've never seen anything like it."

"People were arriving all through the night. One guy had come from the Shetland Islands and there were several from Scotland. Most of them seemed to be carrying papers."

As dawn broke there was no sign of the bird which, according to *Collins' Birds of Britain and Europe*, prefers "damp valley bottoms" and is a rare visitor, west of the Urals. A female was seen off Scotland in 1975, but there had been no sighting of the brightly coloured male in Britain.

The exotic migrant was identified by its red throat and black-and-white striped head. The bird, which breeds in Siberia, is believed to have been flying to southern Asia on its autumn migration.

when it was blown off course by strong winds.

The lanes around Osmington Mills were blocked by abandoned vehicles, and farmers cashed in by charging birdwatchers for parking in their fields. Every bed and breakfast within miles was full and many spent the night in their cars.

Carol Martin, 34, drove from Kent as soon as she heard of the sighting. She said: "I have spent three hours waiting to catch a glimpse of the rubythroat, but have had no luck yet. I'm planning to stay put and hope that patience will eventually pay off."

Karl Evans, of the National Centre for Ornithology, said: "The bird probably got blown off course. When this happens the creature will normally continue its journey after a brief rest. However some are just too tired to go on."

Leading article, page 21

AUTUMN IS THE PERFECT TIME TO ENJOY a change of scene. And with savings of up to 25% at a range of highly individual Forte Heritage hotels, it's also the season of opportunity, offering you the chance to enjoy beautiful surroundings, creature comforts and attentive service - without spending a fortune.

Choose from a wide variety of hotel styles and locations - from quaint, oak-beamed hideaways in picturesque rural hamlets to elegant, luxury establishments in historic cities. Each Heritage hotel has its own distinctive charm and character, while all share two other important features - the facilities you would expect from any modern hotel, and the high standards you would expect from Forte, one of the world's leading hotel companies.

With this superb offer from Forte Heritage, you could be treating yourself to a relaxing break with stylish accommodation, superb service and excellent cuisine for as little as £87 per person for 2 nights, dinner, bed and breakfast included. The offer is available at any of the Forte Heritage hotels listed, for stays up to 22 December 1997.

Why stay confined to your four walls this autumn? Stay with Forte Heritage and enjoy more of a break for less of a price.

DISCOUNTED 2 NIGHT RATE FROM ONLY £87
(Prices per person in £s, dinner, bed and breakfast)

Location	2 nights
RYE The George	£87
CHIFFENHOLD The Two Towers	£88
MATLOCK BATH The New Bath Hotel	£89
SHERBORNE The Sherborne	£90
ALRETON The Star Inn	£91
HERFORD The Green Dragon	£93
STAVES The Thistle Lodge	£94
NORTH BERWICK The Marine	£95
SOUTHWELL The Swan's Head	£96
THETFORD The Bell	£97
FARNHAM The Bush Hotel	£100
WINCHESTER The Wines	£102
ROMSEY The White Horse	£104
ROSS-ON-WYE The Royal	£105
LEEDS The Queen's	£106
DUNDEE The Bell	£108
BRANDONMARKS The Brandon Hall	£109
CHESTER Blossoms Hotel	£108
EXETER The Southgate	£108
YEovil The Manor	£108

DISCOUNTED 2 NIGHT RATE FROM ONLY £87

ABINGDON The Upper Reach	£109
DUNSTER The Luttrell Arms	£109
WIMBORNE The Old England	£109
HEADINGFORD The White Horse	£110
CANBURY The White Horse	£111
LYNN The White Horse	£111
HAMBROUGH The Castle & Bell	£112
ROTHLEYVALES The Royal Court	£113
DOVERDALE The Power of the Poet	£114
FOREST OF DEAN The Speech House	£116
GRANDSIRE The Swan	£116
LONG MELFORD The Bell	£116

DISCOUNTED 2 NIGHT RATE FROM ONLY £151

SALISBURY The White Hart	£117
MUDEFORD The White Horse	£118
BANBURY The White Horse	£119
CHELSEA The White Horse	£120
CANTERBURY The Chequer Hotel	£121
DORKING The White Horse	£122
PADSTOW The White Horse	£127
OXFORD The White Horse	£132
BATH The White Horse	£135
LAVENHAM The Swan	£135
ULSWATER Learning House	£141
DARTMOUTH The Dart House Hotel	£143
BLACKPOOL The Imperial	£145
STANTFORD-U-AYON The Alchemist Manor	£145

DISCOUNTED 2 NIGHT RATE FROM ONLY £151

TORQUAY The Imperial	£151
HELMSLEY The Black Swan	£151
STRATFORD-U-AYON The Shakespeare	£152
WOODSTOCK The Swan Hotel	£159
ST. ANDREW'S The White Horse	£160
COVENTRY The Dolphin	£168
BATH The White Horse	£207

* weekend only * subject only * No/Die only
* not part of the Heritage brand

Offer available until 22nd December 1997. Book before 29th October 1997.
See your travel agent or call

0345 40 40 40

Quoting reference: AUTUMN 3

* Terms and Conditions: Prices are per person based on 2 nights accommodation, full traditional breakfast, 3-course evening meal & VAT at 17.5% based on 2 adults sharing a standard double room. A sole occupancy supplement may be charged. Please ask Reservations Agents for details and costs. Breaks must be taken and confirmed by 22nd December 1997. All reservations are subject to availability with a limited number of rooms available at these promotional rates. These offers cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer or special promotion.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Grandson died under lorry wheel

The grandfather of a seven-year-old boy who was crushed under a wheel of his lorry had been warned by police about letting children ride on the side of the vehicle. St Pancras Coroner's Court, London, was told yesterday.

Jordan Smith was clinging to Joseph Friel's dropside lorry as it entered the car park of the family home at Camden, North London, when he lost his grip. Dr Susan Hungerford, the Coroner, recorded a verdict of accidental death. Mr Friel faces a careless driving case at Clerkenwell next Tuesday.

University alert

More than 500 students at Salford University halls of residence are being immunised against meningitis. A man aged 19 and a woman of 18, from Oaklands Hall, are in hospital after falling ill at the weekend.

Motorcycle death

An off-duty policeman was killed while taking his 14-year-old daughter for a motorcycle ride in Stockport near Manchester. Harold Parker, 50, and Lucy, who suffered abdominal injuries, were in a head-on crash with a car.

Alliance appeal

The Pro-Life Alliance anti-abortion group failed to persuade the Court of Appeal to overturn an earlier decision not to allow a judicial review of the BBC's refusal to show its general election broadcast in full.

Thirst aid

A horse that fell into a swimming pool while trying to drink the water had to be rescued by firemen. Two crews who went to the farm in Aylesford, Kent, drained the pool and built a makeshift ramp with their ladders.

Steamy fiction

Mills and Boon, publishers of romantic fiction, are hoping to update their image with their first poster campaign, featuring a woman reading in the bath. The publishers are promising racier content to lure younger readers.

Flu warning for elderly and sick

By PETER FOSTER

HEALTH officials yesterday urged the elderly and infirm to be vaccinated against flu before winter sets in. The call came at the start of the annual Flu Awareness Week, which aims to reduce the estimated 3,000-to-4,000 flu-related deaths in Britain every year.

Sir Kenneth Calman, the Chief Medical Officer, announced one of the largest vaccination programmes, with 6.5 million shots ready for use. The £35 million campaign follows a severe outbreak last January and the isolation of a new strain of flu virus after the death of a five-year-old boy in Hong Kong earlier this year.

Government scientists yesterday dismissed talk of an

epidemic as alarmist and said there was no indication that this year would be particularly severe.

Professor John Oxford, a virology expert at Royal London Medical College, said the Hong Kong case was merely a "blip on the radar" and no cause for wider concern. "We have 120 laboratories around the world looking for new viruses and all the signals are that there is nothing out there that we don't know about for this year."

Scientists also tried to debunk myths that the vaccine was either ineffective or could itself cause flu. According to research, current vaccines provide up to 80 per cent protection against infection.

Private Medical Care

"Get a second opinion"

before you renew your medical care plan.

Are you paying for more healthcare than you need? Our Lifetime Essentials plan provides prompt access to private medical care from just £15 a month. It gives the reassurance of cover for in-patient treatment for you and your family. That means high quality care when you need it.

So to see if you could be paying less for the essentials, get a second opinion from Legal & General.

For immediate medical cover,
call now on
0500 66 99 66

FREE Pen with each quote
Please quote this reference when you call: 0500 66 99 66
Lines open 9am - 8pm weekdays,
9am - 5pm weekends
To help us improve our service to you, all calls are recorded and routinely monitored.

Legal & General

End tyranny of

Duke make against rig

THE TIMES TUESDAY OCTOBER 21 1997

End tyranny of cars to save countryside, say experts

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

A NEW way of using speeding fines and a ban on cars and lorries on some minor roads were urged yesterday to prevent "the tyranny of the motor car" from destroying the character of the countryside.

The Countryside Commission wants fines and other road taxes to be paid into a fund to pay for the cost of managing traffic and enforcing speed limits more rigorously.

Richard Simmonds, chairman of the commission, which advises the Government on land use, said: "It really is something of a farce that speed cameras are paid for by local authorities, enforcement is carried out by the police and the courts, and all the money goes direct to the Treasury."

Speaking at a conference on rural traffic in London, Mr Simmonds said: "I believe there really is a very good case for making the system of speed control self-financing, to take

much, if not all, the workload off the police."

He added: "In most country roads and lanes it is no longer safe to walk, cycle, push a pram or ride a horse. The car is king of the road, and drivers assume that, if someone is in the road round the corner and an accident occurs, not only will drivers be safe in the 'cocoon' of their vehicles, but it will be the non-motorist's problem for being there."

"In this country there is still an assumption—a presumption—that

you do not usually get caught for speeding, and that it is quite safe to cruise along at 10 per cent or more above the speed limit."

In a report published yesterday, the commission said it was hoping to set up pilot schemes with local authorities for networks of "quiet roads" on town edges that would be reserved for cyclists, horse riders and walkers.

"Unless we move decisively to tackle the problem of traffic growth within a generation, much of the

distinctiveness and quality of the English countryside will be washed away," the report said.

It estimated that the 21 million cars now in use would have risen to 32 million by 2025, and with fewer main roads being built or old ones widened, "inevitably, a prime place for traffic to expand to satisfy unchecked demand is on to minor roads."

This would lead to growing pollution from car noise and exhaust fumes, greater risks to pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders, and increasing suburbanisation, seen in proliferating street lights, concrete kerbs and urban-style road signs and markings.

Glenda Jackson, a Transport Minister, acknowledged that the problem of growing rural traffic had to be tackled, but said it also had to be recognised that "private transport is likely to remain the key to maintaining quality of life for the majority of residents" of the countryside.

Transport reforms 'depend on road pricing'

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

ONE of John Prescott's transport advisers told ministers yesterday to put more effort into "softening up" motorists for the possible introduction of driving charges.

David Begg, appointed last month to a government working group to advise the Transport Secretary, said that ministers' failure to press home the benefits of additional charges would doom planned transport reforms to failure. He said the Government should mount a television advertising campaign, supported by leading transport figures such as Richard Branson, to persuade the public that radical changes are essential.

Charging motorists for driving in congested towns and cities is one of the main reforms being considered by ministers in the run-up to a transport White Paper next spring. A charge of up to £4 per vehicle per visit, administered by an electronic tagging system, is seen by advocates of road pricing as a crucial step towards relieving congestion and pollution.

Mr Begg, Labour chairman of Edinburgh council's transport committee and a professor of transport at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, is one of nine members of the advisory working group. He published a paper arguing for the urgent introduction of charges at the launch of a cross-party think-tank formed to explore the possibilities. The Centre for Management of Traffic and the Environment, headed by Steven Norris, the former Tory Transport Minister.

Mr Begg argues in his paper that, in Edinburgh, £60 million a year could be raised from a £1 charge on each motorist entering a pricing ring around the city. He said that a pricing policy in Singapore had halved the number of cars at rush hour.

Duke makes last stand against right to roam

Michael Hornsby reports on battle ground between a landowner and ramblers who want more freedom

A LONG struggle between ramblers and one of Britain's richest men is reaching its peak on the windswept moorland of Lancashire's Forest of Bowland. The Government is on the brink of unveiling plans for a legal right to roam over uncultivated countryside which would force the Duke of Westminster and other big landowners to open their acres to all under threat of fines or even imprisonment.

For some ramblers, the duke's Abbeystead estate—19,500 acres of heather, fells, woods and farmland east of Lancaster—has become a symbol of landowners' unwillingness to share nature's beauty. For the duke, a compulsory right to roam would be an intolerable restraint on the ability of estate owners to manage their assets.

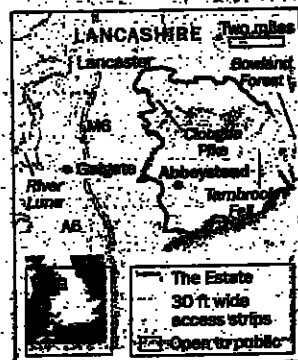
Kate Ashbrook, chairman of the Ramblers' Association, which has 12,000 members, said: "Despite repeated requests over the years, we have been unable to persuade the duke to open up more than a small fraction of his land. This is a poor substitute for the wonderful sense of freedom that comes with not having to worry where you are putting your feet."

The Country Landowners' Association wrote to the Prime Minister earlier this month, complaining that the Government seemed already to have ruled out options such as encouraging landowners to

negotiate access agreements with local ramblers' groups. The duke believes he has done everything to meet reasonable demands of walkers.

Rod Banks, his estate manager, said: "Access to be acceptable, has to be managed. An automatic right to roam would remove the vital element of control."

The duke bought Abbeystead in 1980, after the death of its previous owner, Lord Sefton. Fells and heather moors, rising above 1,800ft, form 12,500 acres of the estate. The remaining 7,000 acres are lower-lying woods and farmland, which would not be covered by the right to roam. An area of 1,499 acres of



moorland around Clougha Pike, in the northwest corner of the estate, has been open to the public since the early 1970s, under an agreement with Lancashire County Council, which leases the land for £5,000 a year.

A 30ft-wide access strip also provides walkers with a route from the Clougha area across the high moor, with a choice of two routes south over Tarnbrook Fell. The strip runs for 11 miles, after being extended by five miles several years ago. This is in addition to 26 miles of public footpaths and bridleways on lower land.

"On paper, this means that only 12 per cent of the moorland is open to the public," Mr Banks said. "But the access routes go over the most scenic parts of the estate. The ramblers have failed to show why they need to be able to roam at will, other than to assert a point of principle."

In a new concession last year, the duke started "wilderness walks" in which groups of up to 12 are taken on day-long rambles by council wardens over areas not normally open to the public. The plan is to have one walk a month

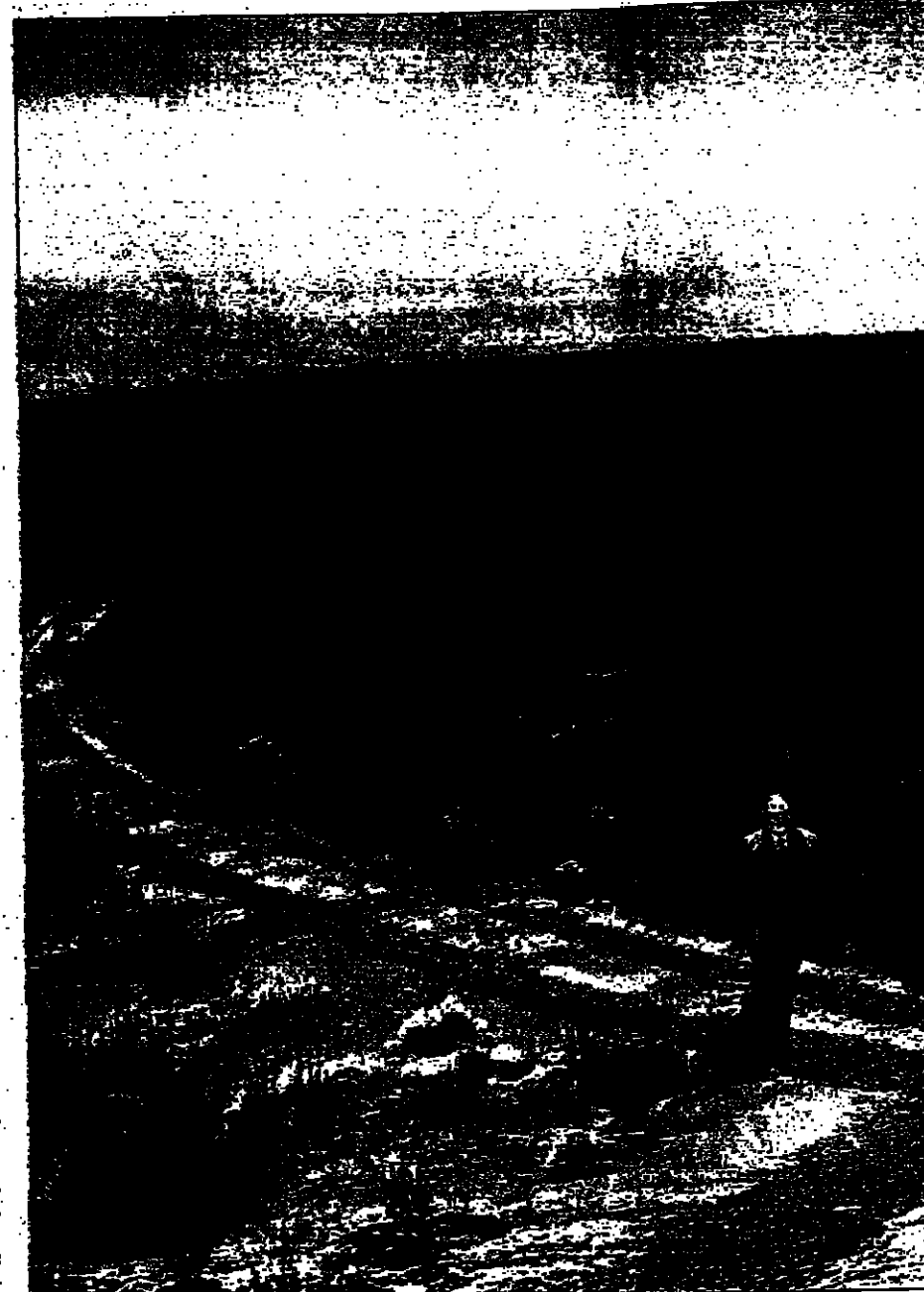
between October and March each year. County wardens police the access areas, enforcing local bylaws which ban dogs, camping, bicycles and kite-flying. The county also rescues walkers who injure themselves or get lost.

"Enforcing the bylaws will be much more difficult if people can go anywhere," Mr Banks said. "The question of liability for the safety of walkers is a potential legal nightmare, and the capital value of the land will diminish once exclusivity is lost."

Tom Pye, one of 22 tenant farmers on the estate, grazes his sheep on the fells. He said: "It will be more difficult to control vandalism and ramblers with dogs. Even now we get trouble. A few weeks ago, a couple of teenage lads knocked down part of a stone wall for fun. It took us more than two days to repair it."

The estate offers some of the best grouse shooting in England. Mr Banks worries that ramblers would disturb the ground-nesting birds during the spring and would hamper heather-burning between October and April.

But the Ramblers' Association believes that such fears are unfounded. "We have never asked for an unqualified right to roam," Ms Ashbrook said. "Landowners will still be allowed to close areas temporarily for grouse shooting, heather-burning or other traditional activities."



Rod Banks, manager of the Abbeystead estate, in one of the public-access areas

THRUST SSC

BREAKS

SOUND

BARRIER

FLY

FOLLOWED

BY

JAGUAR XJR.)



15th October 1997: The day the Thrust SSC officially went supersonic. And strangely enough, a Jaguar XJR was right behind it.

The Thrust team approached us at

Jaguar for assistance in producing a high performance emergency response vehicle (in other words, an incredibly fast fire engine).

So we arranged for our SVO unit

(Special Vehicle Operations) to build the Jaguar 'Firechase'—a converted XJR supercharged saloon.

Its back seats were removed to make room for firefighting and rescue

equipment, but the engine was quite adequate—fast enough to chase and provide back-up for the Thrust SSC towards the end of its run.

The 'Firechase' of course, is a 1996

model XJR. Our new version (part of the new V8 XJ Series) has actually broken a record too. It's the swiftest luxury saloon available today.

Andy Green, just watch your tail.

JAGUAR

DON'T DREAM IT. DRIVE IT.

Please call 0800 70 80 60 for information on Jaguar Cars and Jaguar Financial Services. Internet: www.jaguarcars.com

Parents protest at influx of Gypsy pupils

PARENTS in Dover are threatening to remove pupils from schools that have had to accept more than 100 children from the Gypsy families seeking political asylum.

The Gypsies began arriving from Eastern Europe three months ago and about 800 are now living in the town. The local authority is obliged to provide for their children, who have been shared out among seven schools.

Aycliffe Primary, on a council estate on the outskirts of Dover, has taken six Slovak pupils and another 14 could soon join them. Since few of them speak any English they have been given names

Dover families fear their children's education will suffer as schools take in foreigners, reports Adrian Lee

tags to encourage other children to approach them.

Each morning the Slovaks are taught English before mixing with the other children at break and lunchtime and for lessons during the rest of the day. In a letter to a parent, the head teacher, Ian Shepherd, said he was anxious not to segregate the foreign children, who were "brightened and shy". He expressed concern that some parents had threatened to withdraw their children, but he added: "I cannot say with my hand on my

heart that there will be no difference to [your child's] education."

Yesterday, Kent County Council said the extra cost of teaching the children of the asylum-seekers for a year would be £500,000. The parent who received the letter, Sue Doyle, 34, said: "It's disgusting. They should send them home. They have got to learn somewhere, but I don't see why our children should suffer. There are kids at that school who have been waiting for special needs teaching for ages."

Another parent, Michaela Maxwell, 24, who has two sons aged eight and six at the school, said: "All this attention is being given to them and all this money is being spent and they could just say goodbye and disappear in a year. A lot of the parents are angry and it has got very heated. We feel we have been dumped on."

Mr Shepherd declined to comment and the education authority refused to name any of the schools at which the Slovaks are being taught. A spokesman said: "We don't want to draw attention to the

schools because of the potential for racial problems."

Aycliffe was chosen because pupil numbers there are low. The head teacher also cited the school's "caring nature", making it an ideal environment in which the foreign children could "rebuild their lives". In his letter he said he had watched one Slovak four-year-old count to ten in German, demonstrating her ability to learn languages.

Feelings are also running high in other parts of the town. Residents have written to the local newspaper

to complain of "freeloaders and spongers" flooding Dover, which has a population of 30,000. Concern was also voiced by one local councillor that the sight of asylum-seekers collecting benefit could heighten tensions.

Several residents said they had seen asylum-seekers shoplifting. One woman said: "I saw them ripping off security tags and stuffing clothes inside their jackets."

Yesterday Kent County Council met to discuss £27 million of budget cuts. It said it expected the total bill

for the asylum-seekers to reach £2 million. The local authority said it had reached saturation point but one council source said he had been told that up to 2,000 more eastern Europeans were on their way.

In an interview with Slovak television, Keith Ferris, the council's deputy leader, said: "There is nothing here for you. There is no seasonal work, no place to stay. The place for you is Slovakia."

Yesterday the Ministry of Defence offered a former Royal Marines barracks at Deal to house any further asylum-seekers.

Leading article, page 21

Authorities count cost of providing for refugees

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

COUNCIL taxpayers in Kent face a bill of up to £2 million this year to meet the cost of emergency help for the flood of immigrants claiming asylum at the Channel ports.

In addition, those who claim asylum immediately on arriving at ports such as Dover and Ramsgate are allowed a range of state benefits, including income and child support of up to £100 a week, access to schooling and National Health Service treatment.

The sudden arrival of 46 Slovaks and 125 Czechs last weekend brought the total number of refugees in Dover to between 700 and 800. Officials at Kent County Council estimate that the overall cost of dealing with the hundreds of asylum-seekers detained or living in bed and breakfast accommodation will be between £1 million and £2 million this year.

They forecast that it will cost £500,000 to educate the children of asylum-seekers who are awaiting the outcome of their application to remain in Britain as refugees, with a further £1 million being spent by the social services department. The council has placed 200 children in schools in east

Kent, but officials are considering placing them instead in temporary accommodation where they can receive specialist help with their difficulties, particularly in teaching them English. The council has had to provide interpreters and education welfare officers to help the children to settle down at schools in the county.

The council's social services department has also had to provide emergency clothing and shelter for refugees and at the weekend was forced to open a centre to house the sudden influx of Czech and Slovak families who had arrived on a coach.

The council in Dover has paid out £17,500 in housing benefits to asylum-seekers and the Government has paid a further £315,000 to help to meet accommodation costs. Since the beginning of April it has paid £9,500 to provide bed and breakfast accommodation for asylum-seekers.

If the authorities fear an asylum-seeker will disappear, holding them in an immigration detention centre costs £449 a week, compared with £560 in a prison, according to 1995-1996 figures. A range of state benefits is



Avdi, 26, paid three months' wages to be carried across Europe with his wife, Zerife, 20, in the back of a lorry

also available to anyone claiming asylum immediately on arrival in Britain. The previous Government calculated that the average rate of income support per asylum-seeker per week was £60.30 and that 54 per cent of asylum-seekers received housing benefit in addition at about £81 a week. There are additional

benefits available for people with children.

In an attempt to deter bogus asylum-seekers the Conservative Government cut welfare benefits for people who claimed asylum after arriving here or while awaiting an appeal.

The outcome was chaos for local authorities who have

been faced with the burden of dealing with hundreds of people who wait months for their applications to be processed.

In October 1996 the courts ruled that local authorities had a duty to asylum-seekers under the National Assistance Act of 1948. Although the Government has provided

cash to help meet the costs, it has not covered the total sums involved.

Then in July the courts ruled that councils were not allowed to give refugees cash to buy their own food, so councils have been forced to deliver meals on wheels or food parcels to bed and breakfast hotels.

Long journey in search for a better life

By ADRIAN LEE

AVDI, 26, paid three months of his wages as a factory worker to travel to England in the back of a lorry, as he explained in a mixture of rudimentary English and German, and by scratching on the ground with a stone. He could not or would not say who carried him and his wife, Zerife, 20, nor how they got the idea.

He said that he was from the former Yugoslavia. "I had problems," he said. "Problems with the police."

He arrived in Dover three months ago, staying in a guest house before being found a flat by the council. He receives £35 a week in benefit — more than his wage back home. The couple said they had no idea of their route because the lorry was covered.

"For me, it was no problem where I was going," said Avdi. "England, Germany, America, anywhere as long as it is free. I like it here and I want to live here, but I don't know what is going to happen. The people here have been very good to us."

Another couple, who refused to be named, said that they had travelled to Prague by bus, then on through

Germany and France to reach Britain via Calais. They claimed they organised their own travel, buying tickets on the way and had chosen England because they had heard in their home city — Kosice, in Slovakia — that they would be welcomed here. Two of their three children, aged six, seven and nine, are in local schools after their arrival on August 1.

"The children will learn English," said their father, a former steelworker. "They will get a better education and a better life. As a young boy, I never had these possibilities. I would like to work."

On Dover seaford, another man, in his twenties, said he was from Michalovec, eastern Slovakia. "With all that I get as an immigrant, I can live better than at home working. We all had bad experiences. There is a mafia working with skinheads."

Most of the asylum-seekers wandering around town were reluctant to talk, even more loath to give their names. But Alzbeta Mitkova, 40, from the Czech Republic, said: "We came because we thought we could make a better life here for our children."

My children will get a better education and a better life. I never had these possibilities

Canada opened for then shut it



Bill Wilson

Email? Why does my business need Email?

These days, more and more businesses use Email through Demon Internet — and customers are starting to expect companies to have an Email address. So if you don't currently have Email, you're missing out on what's becoming the fastest and most effective way for companies to communicate.

You can quickly exchange text messages, images, word-processor files, spreadsheets and so on with colleagues or associate companies. No more waiting for couriers or the postman, or trying to read illegible faxes.

Email is just the start. Joining Demon Internet also gives you access to the World Wide Web. Here, you can search for information on practically every subject — including vital corporate data. In addition, your account gives you 5MB of

FREE web space, enabling you to advertise your products and services 24 hours a day... with no borders or time restrictions.

What's more, with Demon Internet's easy-install software for Windows PCs, you can be up and running in just twenty minutes. Send for your free information pack today and discover why Demon Internet now has over 125,000 satisfied customers!

Please fill in and return the coupon or call:

0345 666222

Demon Internet

www.demon.net • Email: sales@demon.net

Please send me a free 30 day trial CD and brochure.

☐ For Home ☐ For Business

Name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

For a FREE 30 day trial CD plus brochure return to: Demon Internet, FREEPOST, Malden, Essex CM9 4ND or contact Demon Sales on Telephone 0345 666 222 or fax on 0161 371 1150

Want a mortgage rate that won't go up? We'll fix it for you.

(At 7.19% APR 7.5% until October 2002 to be precise.)



Wanted over 5 years. National Banks category.

Looking for a mortgage rate that won't start spiralling upwards the moment you get it? Who can blame you. With four rate rises in as many months it's easy to start worrying about repayments.

That's why we've introduced a mortgage rate that's firmly fixed at 7.19% (APR 7.5%) until 31st October, 2002. It'll give you peace of mind, whatever you get up to.

For more details, call TSB PhoneBank, or visit any TSB branch.

Call TSB PhoneBank free quoting ref TM11

0500 758 000

Mortgages

TSB We want you to say YES

Typical example. Interest only mortgage of £40,000 repayable after 30 years to lender £80,000 house purchase. 300 monthly payments of £212.71. Interest rate of 7.19% (APR 7.5%) fixed until 31 October 2002 and will then become variable. Total amount payable £112,334. Available for mortgages of £15,001 or more. There is an early redemption fee equal to one month's interest for each outstanding year or part year remaining until 31 October 2002, subject to a minimum of 3 months. Assumptions: (a) assumes that £30,000 of the mortgage for house purchase is eligible for tax relief at 15%. (b) assumes no charge to the interest rate during or at the end of the fixed rate period shown above. (c) includes typical legal fee of £147 and an arrangement fee of £299. Assignment/assignment of a suitable life policy to the TSB Bank plc. Registered Office: 71 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3BS. Registered in England & Wales. Number: 1180008. TSB Bank Scotland plc (regulated by the Scottish Financial Markets Authority) is a subsidiary of the TSB Banking Group. TSB Bank plc and TSB Bank Scotland plc (regulated by the Financial Services Authority) are appointed representatives of the TSB Marketing Group which is regulated by the Financial Services Authority only for TSB life insurance, pensions, unit trusts and offshore investments. Advice and recommendations relate only to the investments of the TSB Marketing Group. Not available in the Channel Islands.

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT

Spectre of new pogrom drives Romany exodus

Roger Boyes on a people caught in the shadows of Europe's new problems and uncertainties

ACROSS Europe, Romany communities are gripped by the fear of a systematic persecution leading to the kind of pogroms that destroyed their forefathers in the 15th century. Facing hard times in the shanty towns and makeshift settlements of eastern Europe, thousands of Romanies have begun a westward migration. First Canada, now Britain, seemed to offer shelter from a raw climate of persecution which has seen hostels set ablaze by neo-Nazis in the Czech Republic and Germany, police beatings in Bulgaria and Romania, and even bomb attacks.

Ill-treatment of Romanies is nothing new: 400,000 died in Nazi concentration camps. But their world has been changing rapidly for the worst since the collapse of Communism. Nationalist parties in central and eastern Europe are free to stir up anti-Romany sentiment and Romanies were the first to feel the pinch of economic reform.

Women lost their jobs as cleaners in state companies and the men were the first to be sacked. Ninety-five per cent of adults in the Romany ghettos on the fringes of Bulgarian cities are unemployed. Petty crime, including car theft, is their main source of income.

Bureaucratic hurdles to claiming welfare payments have been raised again and

again. Although the Romanies of central Europe gave up their nomadic lifestyle 350 years ago, the shifting from one region to another has made it almost impossible for some families to present the residential qualifications needed to qualify for Czech citizenship.

Romanies clustered in the Czech Sudetenland when the Germans were expelled by the Czech authorities after the war. When Czechoslovakia split in 1993, the Czech Government insisted that most of those Romanies — some 250,000 — were Slovaks, and Prague did its utmost to push them over the border.

Local authorities offer many reasons for this step — that the Romanies dominate crime syndicates, that they steal and rape — but, peeling away the prejudice, it is clear that the main fear was that the Romanies would overburden the welfare state. Slovakia has

been even less welcoming. Vladimir Mestiar, the Prime Minister, has demanded cuts in child benefits, and unemployment of Romanies in Slovakia is high: most youths work as casual labourers across the border in Austria.

Even there, Romanies have been given rough treatment. A fake gravestone was placed by neo-Nazis near a former Austrian concentration camp which held Gypsies before they were sent to Auschwitz. When four Gypsies tried to rip it down, a pipe-bomb exploded and killed them.

Romanies were encouraged to travel to Canada by a broadcast on the private Czech television channel Nova. The programme, dismissed as misleading by Canadian authorities, suggested it was easy to gain asylum. Canadian citizenship and generous welfare cheques.

Britain featured in a Nova sequel to the programme on

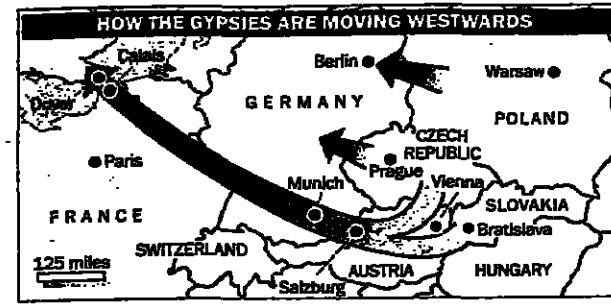


An 18th-century drawing of Gypsies in central Europe. Said to have originated in the Punjab, they left Persia for Byzantium and the Balkans

Canada. With Your Own Eyes, screened on September 30, depicted the progress of a Romany, his pregnant wife and five children from Kosice in eastern Slovakia to Dover, where he claimed asylum. The father complained that he had to take a daughter out of school in Kosice because she was taunted by fellow pupils. Recommendations about Britain were passed on by

word of mouth in a community in which few read newspapers and few watched the Nova broadcast. But there seems no sign that the programme was presented as a paradise for Romanies. The 1994 Criminal Justice Act, scrapping the obligation on local councils to provide permanent sites for Romanies and introducing the principle of "mass trespass" for a gathering of six vehicles on a field, does not constitute a welcoming embrace.

Romanies are almost always considered bogus asylum-seekers in Britain. Yet evidence gathered by human rights organisations suggests persecution across the continent. With almost eight million Romanies in Europe, they represent its largest stateless minority.



Canada opened door, then shut it

FROM RICHARD CLEWORTH IN OTTAWA

IT BEGAN innocently enough. On April 1, 1996, to foster closer relations with the Czech Republic, Canada lifted the requirement that Czech visitors first obtain a visa. Instead, they simply had to produce a passport and show a return airline ticket.

Immediately, there was an influx of Czech visitors who, on arriving in Canada, claimed asylum as refugees. In all of 1995, there had been only 29 Czech refugee applications. By the end of 1996, there were 189. And the number kept increasing.

In August of this year, a programme aired on Czech television described Canada as a haven for Gypsies and a land of abundance where welfare was easy to get and Gypsies were not subject to discrimination in housing, jobs and educational opportunities. By September 30, a total of 1,285 Czech Gypsies

had arrived as tourists and applied as refugees. Half had arrived after the television programme.

On October 7, Lucienne Robillard, the Immigration Minister, reluctantly reimposed visa requirements on everyone coming to Canada as tourists from the Czech Republic. "The minister said that she had no choice."

Canadian officials tried their best to tell Czech television that Canada was not the promised land, and that applying for refugee status meant a long stay in a shelter or cheap motel.

Since October 10, there has not been one refugee application from the Czech Republic. Canada will continue to accept refugee applications at its foreign missions. There was never a problem with Gypsies from the Slovakia, because that visa requirement was never removed.

THE TIMES/DILLONS FORUM

A satirical walk with BILL BRYSON



READERS are invited to a forum with the best-selling author Bill Bryson, when he will read extracts from his gripping new book, *A Walk in the Woods*, giving accounts of his experiences along the longest footpath in the world, the Appalachian Trail.

The trail promised Bryson endless days of walking, nights of eating strange foods and, most importantly, the chance to

turn his inquiring, satirical eye once again on his native America.

The forum on Tuesday, November 4, will be held at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1E, at 7.30pm. Tickets at £10 (concessions £7.50) include £2 off the price of *A Walk in the Woods* (Doubleday, £16.99).

There will also be an opportunity for the audience to ask questions.

THE BILL BRYSON FORUM

Please send me (tick one) at £10 each (£7.50 concessions) for The Times/Dillons Bill Bryson Forum on Tuesday, November 4, at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1E

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

DAY PHONE No. _____

I enclose my cheque made payable to Dillons the Bookstore

Value £ _____ Cheque number _____

(Please write your name and address on the back of the cheque)

Or, please debit my Credit / Bank Debit / Dillons account card number _____

Expiry date _____ Switch issue number ☐

PRINT NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

Please post coupon and remittance to:

The Times/Dillons Bill Bryson Forum

Dillons, 32 Gower Street, London WC1E 6EQ

Tel: 0171-467 1613. Fax: 0171-467 1690

E-mail: orders@gower.dillons.org.uk

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Ticket number _____ Date sent _____

Your passport to a holiday

Canon

Thomas COOK

Canon's new Bubble Jet printers

offer you a vividly colourful

experience in more ways than

one. When you buy one of our

BJC-250 or BJC-4300 models,

you can save up to £200 off

your next Thomas Cook **BJC-250/BJC-4300**

holiday.* On selected models

you also get up to £65 worth

of ink and software for free. In

fact, just about the only thing

that's not included is sunblock.

YOU AND CANON CAN.

If you'd like more information,

please call 0645 04 04 04.

www.canon.co.uk

Holidays for a minimum of 2 adults for 1 week (or more). Conditional on purchase of Thomas Cook Recommended Insurance. Offer applies to promotional printers only. Applications are invalid if the printer is returned for a full cash refund within 14 days. Full terms and conditions available on request. Business purchases excluded. Offer open to UK residents aged 18 or over. *Value of certificate for BJC-250 - £240, BJC-4300 - £200.

Japanese to ban whale-killing 'torture lance'

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

THE withdrawal of the electric lance, used by Japanese to kill whales and long considered an instrument of torture by nations including Britain, is to be announced at the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

The decision, considered the biggest breakthrough in animal welfare for more than a decade and coming after years of lobbying by conservation groups and nations led by Britain and New Zealand, follows new scientific evidence. It underlines the lance's cruelty and ineffectiveness as a killing tool.

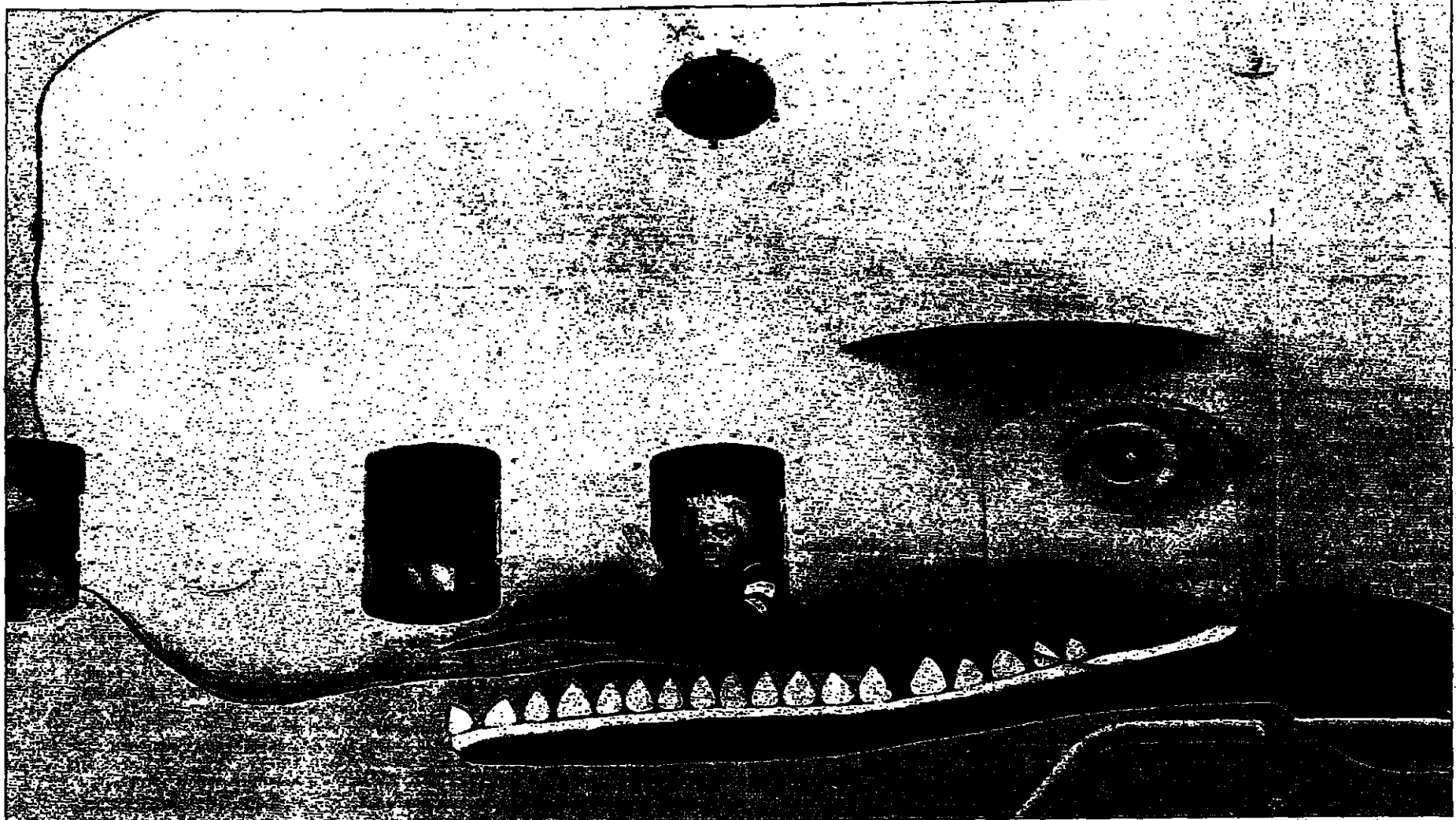
Elliot Morley, a junior Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Minister who is attending the IWC's annual meeting which opened in Monaco yesterday, said: "This is the good news story that will come out of Monaco and a success story for us."

He said the Japanese had "accepted the new scientific evidence" on the ineffectiveness of the lance, two of which are forced into a

harpooned whale to deliver current. Their ships have, over the past 12 months, been testing high-velocity rifles, and the whalers have concluded that they are more effective and easier to use.

Mr Morley said Britain, which expects the Japanese to announce the lance's withdrawal tomorrow or Thursday, remained opposed to whaling. But he said Japan was continuing to kill whales under the guise of scientific whaling. "Whales are being killed in quite large numbers. We want to use our influence to improve the welfare wherever possible. I think we have done that," he said.

David Bowles, European campaigner at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, said: "We have been working to get rid of the electric lance. This is the first time a piece of whaling equipment has been phased out since 1980, when the cold harpoon was withdrawn by Japan and Norway."



Captain Paul Watson, a Canadian anti-whaling campaigner, aboard the ship *Sea Shepherd* in Monte Carlo port yesterday. He failed to gain entry to the conference.

German euro row deepens

By Roger Boyes and Our Foreign Staff

SHARP differences over the future shape of European economic and monetary union have been flushed to the surface by public disagreement between two influential members of the German central bank, the Bundesbank.

The controversy erupted as Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, met Tony Blair at Chequers for informal talks about Europe. The visiting leader was expected to urge the earliest possible British participation in the euro. The Bundesbank is required next spring to give its verdict on who should be allowed to entertain the first wave of euro. The report is regarded as vital in informing parliament before it votes on the issue and influencing the outcome of an EMU challenge in the constitutional court.

The President of the central

bank of North Rhine-Westphalia, Reimut Jochimsen, said at the weekend that he favoured a small monetary union, made up only of the so-called hard core countries. Long regarded as a highly sceptical participant of the 16-member central bank council of the Bundesbank, Professor Jochimsen told an audience in Grinow he was shocked that serious government politi-

cians were diverging from the strict interpretation of the convergence criteria for monetary union and readying themselves to make the mark a "political dawn sacrifice for European integration".

Professor Jochimsen was contradicted yesterday by another central bank council member, Klaus Dieter Kühnacker, who said that the monetary union should be

based on the largest possible number of participants.

The president of the Bundesbank emphasised yesterday that prospective EMU participants had to demonstrate from the outset their ability to conform to the stability criteria. This is a reference to the Maastricht treaty requirements that euro participants keep their public sector deficit down to 3 per

cent of gross domestic product and their total debt down to 60 per cent of GDP. Herr Tietmeyer said euro members should not be allowed "to grow into the euro" — that is, be given leeway later on.

Analysts believe the Bundesbank council — unlike the public utterances of German politicians — may end up opposing Italian entry, since Italy's deficit figures for 1998 are expected to be substantially worse than in 1997.

In Italy, a chain of supermarkets in 15 cities yesterday began pricing items in the new euro currency for a three-week trial period.

"The earlier people get to know the euro, the better," said Emma Bonino, the European Union's Consumer Commissioner, launching the experiment. "It is a huge psychological revolution."

Goods at the stores participating in the initiative will be priced in both currencies. An exchange rate of 2,000 lire per euro was set.

Another experiment — actually using euro notes — is going on in the Tuscan towns of Fiesole and Pontassieve. On October 1 residents began using the euro at more than 100 bars, clothing stores and other businesses for a six-month test.

Anatole Kaletsky, page 20
Letters, page 21
Volatile markets, page 27
Commentary, page 28

Franc is spent force in mint revolution

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FRANCE will stop minting francs in six months' time to make way for the euro. The move, announced yesterday, is intended to show that the French Government is confident of joining the single European currency on time.

Barring any derailment in the schedule for economic and monetary union (EMU), the last franc will be struck next March, more than six centuries after the currency came into use. After that date, the mint at Pessac, near Bordeaux, where all French coinage is made, will produce only the European currency.

The debate in Britain over whether to join EMU has lent added significance to the French announcement heralding the disappearance of the franc — which derives its name from historical anti-English feeling.

The franc emerged in 1360, at the height of the Hundred Years War, after the French King Jean II, known as "The Good", was captured by the English and ransomed for three million "gold coins": the King was thus said to be "franc des Anglais" — free of the English. The name for a particular coin stuck, but it was not until the Revolution that the franc became part of the new decimal coinage system.

Some 700 million new franc coins, in various denominations, will be struck between now and March, and the Bank of France has estimated that they will provide sufficient reserves to last until January 2002, when the euro is planned to be fully in use.

The single currency is due to be launched in January 1999, and the Pessac mint is expected to produce some 7.6 billion euro coins over the

the Maastricht criteria. "We will not be among those who will qualify," those who will have a maximum deficit of 3 per cent of GDP, which is one of the required criteria. "We are doing exactly the opposite of what other European countries are doing, and are going to have to pay for it with tens of thousands more people out of work."

Even before production of the franc ceases the French currency appears to be vanishing, with the mysterious disappearance of millions of ten-franc pieces. Currency experts blame booming tourism. About 60 million foreign tourists spend at least one night in France each year, while an additional 50 million take a day-trip.

"If each of these people takes away two or three ten-franc bits, that makes hundreds of millions removed from circulation," Emmanuel Comans, the currency director, said.

Charles Pasqua, the former Gaullist Interior Minister and veteran anti-Maastricht campaigner, yesterday called for another referendum on whether France should join EMU, arguing that conditions had changed since the country narrowly voted in favour of the treaty in 1992.

"Many still doubt that the country will qualify to join economic and monetary union in the first wave."

next three or four years. While the practicalities of introducing the euro are already well under way in France, many still doubt that the country will qualify to join EMU in the first wave.

Nicolas Sarkozy, a former Budget Minister and Gaullist party spokesman, said the Socialist Government's policy of cutting the working week to 35 hours from 39 would prevent France from meeting

Social Democrats look to Blair

EUROPE'S Social Democrats have been flocking to London to win Tony Blair's support for their often contradictory policies on monetary union (Michael Binyon writes).

Pearo Lipponen, Finland's Prime Minister, was yesterday the latest politician from Europe's northern tier to seek support in Downing Street. He followed Gerhard

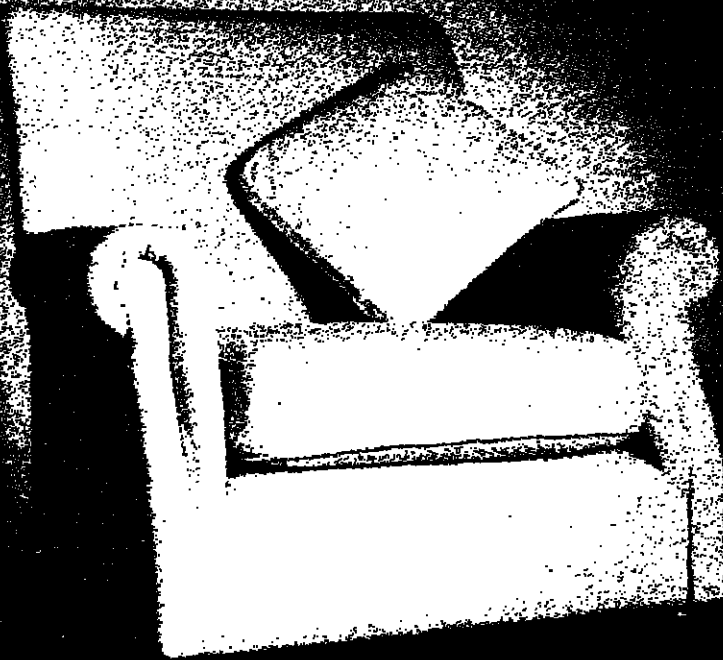
Schröder, the German Social Democrat, and Gunnar Lund, Sweden's Deputy Foreign Minister.

All agree that Britain's decision will crucially affect the success of the single currency. But while German and Finnish Social Democrats want Britain in as fast as possible, the Swedes want Britain to stay out to lessen the pressure on Stockholm to follow other

European Union partners into economic and monetary union.

Mr Lipponen, who also had talks yesterday with Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, said Finland wanted Britain to participate in the euro from the start. This would help to keep a balance among the larger states. But Britain's decision could not be rushed.

Why, when doing things together strengthens relationships, are you one of the 70% who regularly work weekends?



We must like our colleagues. Why else would 21% of managers be at work before 7.30 am and 28% after 8.00 pm? Do their jobs demand it?

Not necessarily. UK bosses waste 25% of their working week on things such as getting coffee, taking messages and day dreaming.

Time better spent talking to your partner, making a meal together or going away for the weekend.

BT Conference Call enables you to hold meetings, conferences — even brainstorming — with people from many different locations, wherever you like. Without leaving your office or home.

All you need is a phone.

Call BT Conference Call to arrange a free demonstration of telephone meetings

Freefone 0800 731 2288

www.confrencing.bt.com

BT Conferencing

Why not change your approach to meetings?



Flak aimed at air force candidate

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE man chosen by President Clinton as the first black chief of the US Air Force has become engaged in a racial dogfight after former colleagues claimed he was an unsafe pilot and an egotist who played on his colour to remain in the cockpit.

Daryl Jones, 42, a Florida state senator whom the White House plans to name as the next Secretary of the Air Force, is regarded as a competent politician. But his nomination has been jeopardised by a catalogue of past flying mishaps which led to a permanent grounding in 1991.

Fellow pilots in the 93rd Tactical Fighter Squadron, a combat-ready reserve unit in Florida, claim he was a negligent pilot who blamed others for his inability and was "a formula for disaster". They also allege that he was the undeserving product of affirmative action programmes designed to help minorities.

While the White House maintains that Mr Jones is being hired as a civilian and not an F16 pilot, the controversy is beginning to resonate at the Pentagon and throughout a service already plagued by widespread scandal.

Major Alan Estis, a reservist who was to become the squadron's next commander, has resigned from the air force because he has refused to work for Mr Jones. While Mr Jones was an active-duty pilot of F4 fighters in the early 1980s, he was immediately grounded when he joined the 93rd squadron in 1989. All the other new pilots had thousands of hours' flying time in F16s, while he had none.

A PRIZE DRAW THE TIMES

FOUR FABULOUS CARS TO BE WON



This week *The Times* has teamed up with *The Sunday Times* and Churchill Insurance to offer readers the chance to win one of four exciting cars worth around £20,000 each.

The Lotus Elise is one of the most exciting cars of recent years, technically innovative with fabulous styling and incredible handling. The Freelander is

for those who want the style of an off-roader but the practicality and easy driving of a saloon. The V16 is the raciest Volkswagen Golf of them all, sexy in black with black leather interior, and the Espace is for serious weekend drivers, diesel-powered for maximum fuel savings on long journeys with flexible loading space.

quickly and efficiently by a nationwide chain of approved repairers. Carways cars are available and, in the unlikely event Churchill fails to meet agreed standards of service, the next renewal premium will be reduced by £20.

THE TIMES CHURCHILL INSURANCE PRIZE DRAW TOKEN 14

HOW TO ENTER: Simply collect ten differently numbered tokens from *The Times* and two differently numbered tokens from *The Sunday Times*. Tokens will be published daily until Sunday, November 2. Attach your tokens to the entry form which will be published on Saturday. Entries must be received by the closing date, Monday November 10, 1997.

For full terms and conditions, please refer to the back of the entry form or visit our website at www.churchill.co.uk

CHANGING TIMES

Rome sees allay fear of apocaly



Nip near floating

The switch Lloyds Bank Insurance was as

as falling a bike."

saved £122

0800

Rome seeks to allay fears of apocalypse

THE Vatican sought yesterday to reassure Italians over widespread fears that the continuing Umbrian earthquakes presage a pre-millennial disaster, and possibly the end of the world.

Senior Vatican officials revealed for the first time that the third "secret of Fatima" to which only the Pope and his closest advisers have access is not linked to the millennium and contains no forecast of apocalyptic doom. The earthquakes, which have damaged priceless artworks in centres of Christianity such as Assisi and Spoleto, are regarded by some Italians as proof of dire forecasts allegedly contained in the writings of the 16th-century astrologer Nostradamus, and in prophecies linked to appearances by the Virgin Mary to three peasant children in Fatima, Portugal, in 1917.

In an unusual move, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith — the modern successor to the Inquisition — told the Catholic daily *L'Avvenire* that reports that

The Vatican has lifted the veil on the 'last secret of Fatima', reports Richard Owen

the "last secret of Fatima" referred to the disintegration of the papacy and the Church in a worldwide social and moral collapse were untrue. The "secrets" were revealed by the Virgin Mary — "a lady brighter than the sun" — to Lucia dos Santos and her two cousins while they were tending sheep. The vision occurred six times, to a growing crowd of witnesses, culminating in "balls of fire" as the sun appeared to fall to earth, a phenomenon seen by 70,000 people.

Fatima has since become a significant Marian shrine, with obsessive speculation about the "three secrets" which are held in the Vatican

and have never been published. The first is said to offer a hellish vision of "charred bodies in an ocean of fire" — a possible forecast of the Second World War — coupled with a message to the world to "repent". The second secret, which was disclosed in 1942 by Cardinal Ildefonso Schuster of Milan, was that Russia, which was in the grip of a Marxist revolution at the time of the vision, would "spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecution", but ultimate disaster would be averted if Russia converted to Christianity. Sister Lucia, now a Carmelite nun in her nineties at Coimbra, near Fatima, suggests the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev and a Polish Pope — John Paul II — together constituted "an action by God to free the world from the danger of nuclear war".

Many believe, however, that the "third secret" involves a "terrible cataclysm at the end of the century" because of the failure of the world to repent fully. In a rare interview yesterday, Loris Francesco Capovilla, the former secretary to Pope John XXIII, said the Fatima document contained "no deadline of doom". He told *La Stampa*: "The secret is not linked to the end of the millennium as people have claimed."

Mgr Capovilla, 82, is one of the few people other than the Pope, Cardinal Ratzinger and Sister Lucia who knows what the Fatima secrets contain. In the secretive world of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, it is highly unusual for a papal secretary to make disclosures. He said he could not reveal what the third secret was, but talk of "millions of deaths" was inaccurate. "You can exclude this," he said.

Mgr Capovilla said the "horrors" of the Spanish Civil War and the Holocaust, to which the secrets appeared to refer, were behind us. "Of course more will die, but you don't need divine inspiration to see that. Man is capable of anything, and there are a lot of



Pilgrims at Fatima where the Virgin Mary is said to have given prophecies to three peasant children in 1917

atomic weapons around. It only takes one madman to lose his head... only now are we becoming aware of the responsibility we all share." Asked if the prophecy would cause panic if revealed publicly, he replied elliptically that "nothing could be worse" than the private troubles many families already had to face.

Sister Lucia sent the "secrets" in a handwritten letter to Pope Pius XII but said their meaning would not become clear until 1960. Pius XII died in 1958, and in 1960 his successor John XXIII set in motion the reformist Second Vatican Council, which some see as the beginning of damaging divisions between liberal and conservative Catholics. Last week René Laurentin, a theologian, said the third secret was that the Church would collapse because of "temptations and deviations".

But Mgr Capovilla said that "internal struggles within the Church have nothing to do with the Fatima prophecy. We have always had heresies and disputes." He also denied reports that Pope Paul VI was quoting from the third secret when he spoke about "the smoke of Satan entering the Church".

Mgr Capovilla said it was not clear whether Pius XII had ever opened the Fatima letter, which he had found "sealed in the archives. It was only after he had announced the Second Vatican Council that John XXIII went to Castelgandolfo [the Pope's summer residence] and asked me to bring him the Fatima letter. He did not open

phrase: 'I make no judgement'."

When Paul VI became Pope in 1963, he asked the Holy Office for the Fatima letter, and panic ensued when it could not be found. "I told them it was in the Pope's own desk, in a right-hand drawer, second or third down. A few days later, Paul VI asked me whether John XXIII had said anything except 'I make no judgement'. I said no, and the

snatched from them in a second — if you know this, there is no need to publish the secret." The Pope is devoted to the cult of Fatima, and regards it as providential that the abortive attempt on his life by a Turkish gunman in 1981 took place on May 13, the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima. He donated the bullet extracted from his body to the shrine, where it is embedded in the Virgin's golden crown, surrounded by pearls and precious stones.

□ Rome: A series of earthquakes shook central Italy yesterday, registering between 3.2 and 4 on the Richter scale, the Rome Institute of Geophysics reported. There were no reported victims or damage from the tremors, which were all centred near Sallano, Casenovo di Poligno and Verchiano, on the border between the provinces of Umbria and the Marche, 120 miles north of Rome. The total damage from the Assisi earthquake last month has been estimated at nearly 2,000 billion lire (£74 million) and 38,000 people have still not been able to return to their homes. (AFP)

6 The Fatima secret contains no deadline for doom and is not linked to the end of the millennium, as people have claimed 7

it until his confessor came five days later." Mgr Capovilla said the Pope handed him the letter, "four or five pages handwritten in dialect by a girl with only local culture. It was not easy to understand." It was translated by Mgr Paolo Tavaré, later Bishop of Macao. "The Pope then dictated a note to me, saying, 'The Holy Father has read this letter and orders it to be put back in its envelope, with this

Pope said, 'In that case, I shall not say anything either'."

Despite the attempts to calm fears, the disclosures are unlikely to put an end to pre-millennial speculation, especially since Pope John Paul II has hinted at apocalyptic visions. Talking to German prelates privately in 1980, he said: "When you read that oceans will inundate entire continents, and that millions of men will suddenly have life

Milosevic puppet ousted by liberal reformer

By Tom Walker

VICTORY was claimed by Milo Djukanovic in the runoff for the Montenegrin presidency yesterday, the first non-nationalist to climb to the top in Yugoslav politics in a decade.

The dapper reformist, 35, wants to give Montenegro increased autonomy from its sister state, Serbia, while staying within the Yugoslav Federation. He is an avowed opponent of federal President Milosevic, and claims that his rise to power signals the beginning of the end for the region's former war-mongers.

The man Mr Djukanovic has deposed, Momir Bulatovic, a Milosevic loyalist, accepted defeat with bad grace, claiming that voting lists were rigged and predicting the break-up of Yugoslavia. Djukanovic supporters celebrated with fireworks and a display of automatic weapons fire.

During the campaigning, Mr Djukanovic said he wanted to liberalise the Montenegrin economy and negotiate for international credits with lenders such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Montenegro, with less than a tenth of Serbia's population, is barred from such financing by the "outer wall" of sanctions imposed on Yugoslavia, thanks mainly to Mr Milosevic's unwillingness to co-operate on human rights and the handing over of war criminals.

Mr Djukanovic described himself as "a modern political personality who will turn a page in political life here". He was, he said, "an opponent of any form of nationalism. I do not believe in the concept of the nation state, I believe in the civil state."

Without being specific on the arrests of The Hague's two most wanted war crimes suspects, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, Mr Djukanovic agreed that Yugoslavia must honour its commitments within the Dayton peace accord.



Fatima's basilica, on the site of the vision of the Virgin

Mir pair clear floating debris

Moscow: Two Russian cosmonauts on the damaged space station Mir retrieved a refrigerator door and other floating debris yesterday during a six-hour mission inside the airless Spektr module, punctured when the complex collided with a cargo spacecraft (Robin Lodge writes).

Wearing bulky spacesuits,

Flight Commander Anatoli Solovyov and Flight Engineer Pavel Vinogradov squeezed through the narrow hatch into the Spektr module to reroute cables from its solar panels to a working computer. Their first task was to gather and secure all the debris — including some of the belongings of Michael Foale,

the British-born Nasa astronaut who completed a four-month mission on Mir in September — which have been floating around Spektr since the June accident. With all the flying objects — including the fridge door — secured or collected into bags, the two men set about the task of realigning the power cables.

WORLD SUMMARY

Ali boxing souvenirs fetch \$1.3m

Los Angeles: Hundreds of souvenirs of Muhammad Ali's boxing career fetched more than \$1.3 million (£800,000) at a controversial charity auction snubbed by the boxer (Giles Whittell writes).

One cigarette went for \$1,900, and Ali's clothing from his "rumble in the jungle" in Zaire sold for nearly \$250,000. But Ali, who styled himself as "the greatest", has claimed that some items were stolen from him. He was not at the auction room for Sunday's sale. Christie's said it held the title to every item sold.

Kidnap pledge

SANAA: The Yemeni authorities have assured the British Embassy here that Henry Thompson, a British aid worker kidnapped by tribesmen, will be released soon, a spokesman said. (AFP)

Rising heat

Sydney: Greenpeace activists climbed onto the roof of the home of John Howard, the Australian Prime Minister, to assemble solar panels in protest at his "flawed" policy on greenhouse gases. (Reuters)

Cannon victim

Cincinnati: A boy aged 14 is in serious condition in hospital here after being thrown 18ft in the air as a cannon misfired during a US Civil War battle being re-enacted in an Ohio park. (Reuters)

Car insurance over £250?

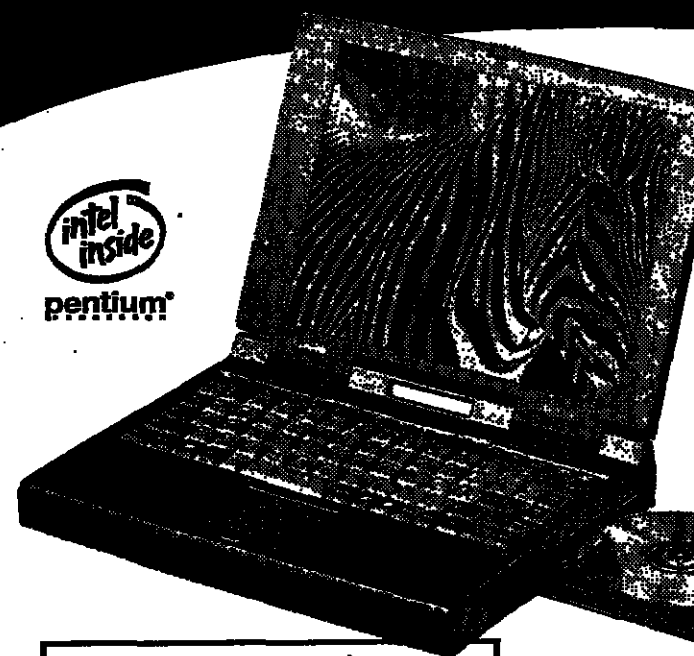
For quality, low cost cover call Hastings Direct

0800 00 1066

Please quote ref: T066

Hastings DIRECT

Make a few comparisons. Draw your own conclusions.



Model	Price
Echos Pro 150X (XGA)	£1,999 inc VAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.1" TFT XGA (1024 x 768, 256 colour) • Intel Pentium® Processor 150MHz • 2.0GB HDU • 16MB RAM • High speed CD-ROM • Fully dockable • Windows® 95 • 3 year warranty! Desk-to-desk service 	

Model	Price
Echos Pro 150S (SVGA)	£1,999 inc VAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.1" TFT SVGA (800 x 600, 65k colour) • Intel Pentium® Processor 150MHz • 2.0GB HDU • 16MB RAM • High speed CD-ROM • Fully dockable • Windows® 95 • 3 year warranty! Desk-to-desk service 	

0800 44 77 99

Go on. Jot down the prices of some other top notebook brands. Fact is, we don't think you'll find one that compares with Olivetti Echos Pro — but at least you'll know what a bargain you're getting! Beautifully designed, simple to use and, above all, reliable, our notebooks combine outstanding service and support with unrivalled value for money.

Call today for your local stockist and discover more about our complete range of fully-dockable Olivetti Echos Pro notebooks, including models based on sizzling Intel Pentium® processors with MMX™ technology.

olivetti
COMPUTERS
WORLDWIDE

"The switch to Lloyds Bank Insurance Direct was as easy as falling off a bike."

Mr Luckham, Leicester saved £122 on his Home Insurance.

82% of new callers got a cheaper quote. New customers saved an average of £47. 10% saved over £100.

Enough said?

0800 750 750
quote reference DP063

Lloyds Bank Insurance Direct

Your call may be recorded for accuracy of information. Statistics drawn from independent research & quote records (1997).

* Offer to £299.95 on Friday. Availability subject to all other stock. Outside UK dial +44 202 44 77 99. * One year only on screen and keyboard. Desk-to-desk service available for a limited time during the warranty period. The Olivetti logo and Pentium are registered trademarks of Intel Corporation. All other product names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. Olivetti Computers Worldwide reserves the right to change specifications and prices without prior notice. Screen image shown is simulated.

French rescue foreigners in Congo chaos

FRENCH troops based in Gabon yesterday rescued a group of French and African nationals who had been trapped by fighting in the south of Congo-Brazzaville.

French Lieutenant-Colonel Christian Batisse said the group of 19, including five French citizens, were plucked from a town in Zanaga region, 180 miles northeast of the ousted President Lissouba's stronghold of Dolisie.

Fighting has been reported in the region where his forces and militia allies retreated after losing a five-month civil war in the capital last week. French troops evacuated 59 foreigners, most of them French, last Friday after the civil war victory of the Cobra militia of the former military ruler, General Denis Sassou-Nguesso.

General Sassou-Nguesso's forces took control of Brazzaville, the capital, last Tuesday and, together with Angolan army allies, overran the oil hub of Pointe Noire to the south last Wednesday. Security sources reported massive looting by the victorious forces and growing insecurity in the two cities.

Last night, Angolan commandos sent as part of a team of shock troops whose first task was to take over the capital in support of General Sassou-Nguesso were guarding the presidential palace in Brazzaville. "It's difficult," said Frank, an Angolan com-



The Angolan rebels of Jonas Savimbi face a multinational campaign to destroy them, Sam Kiley in Brazzaville reports

mando. "Whose war is this anyway?" As he picked his way through the charred hair-dressing salon built for the exclusive use of Albertine Dibebeke, wife of deposed President Lissouba, he said: "My Government has sent me as some kind of mercenary." After months of fighting, the centre of the city has been flattened or shattered into vast

¶ We must restore order and will do so fast. We are going to collect all the weapons in the wrong hands ¶

concrete splinters, leaving about 4,000 dead.

However, the battle for the once-sleepy capital of an obscure African country was part of a wider regional campaign which diplomats and sources inside several African security services said will culminate in a multinational effort to destroy the rebel Union for the Total Indepen-

dence of Angola (Unita), led by Jonas Savimbi. President dos Santos of Angola and Paul Kagame, the Rwandan Vice-President, are expected to arrive discreetly in Kinshasa, a mile across the Congo River from Brazzaville, to discuss what is being dubbed "Africa's Operation Cleanup" today.

In the past 12 months the leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaïre) have conspired in ousting Mobutu Sese Seko from Kinshasa, and in attempts to contain rebel movements in Uganda and Rwanda.

They have also increased support to Sudan's southern rebels, who are fighting for autonomy from Khartoum's radical Islamic Government.

Yesterday Angolan troops tightened security around Brazzaville's international airport in a clear sign that the Angolans' invasion of Congo-Brazzaville from Cabinda, and their support in Brazzaville itself, was far from the temporary security operation that their Government claimed last week. Already cut off from its



Cobra militiamen on patrol in Brazzaville to curb looting of areas that were controlled by the forces of the ousted President Lissouba

rear bases in the Democratic Republic of Congo after Mobutu, its ally, fell, Unita lost its last external camps in Congo-Brazzaville last week.

"The next target will probably be Unita. That will take a lot of preparation," said a central African intelligence source. Dr Savimbi's rebels, who have been fighting the central Government for almost 20 years, have earned \$600 million (£372 million) a year from

diamond exports since 1992, more than enough to finance a war in the region. But such grand schemes will have to wait.

The immediate task of the Angolan troops, General Sassou-Nguesso's Cobras and several experienced African mercenaries with a long-standing relationship with French intelligence, who have been leading the militia, will be to control the huge num-

bers of armed men roaming the streets of the capital in search of loot.

The pickings are thin. Most civilians fled the fighting when it broke out in June after President Lissouba sent soldiers to disarm General Sassou-Nguesso's forces, leaving their homes and businesses to be fought over.

"We have to restore order and will do so very fast. We are going to collect all the

weapons in the wrong hands," said Brazzaville's military leader, General Jean-Marie Tassoua.

The fighting has been over for a week in Brazzaville, but doctors said yesterday that at least 200 people were arriving in the city's hospitals each day, mostly victims of random shooting and petty squabbles.

At Brazzaville's beach, a muddy bank which serves as the only route for goods

cramped into dugouts and paddled over the Congo from Kinshasa, guns, beer and strong pot make a terrifying cocktail. The market for smuggled goods and looted refrigerators and televisions continues against a background of gunfire.

Yesterday, Mr Lissouba was in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. Ablassé Ouedraogo, its Foreign Minister, confirmed.

Mrs Mandela makes populist bid for power

FROM R. W. JOHNSON IN JOHANNESBURG

THE candidacy of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela for the deputy presidency of the African National Congress has taken a new turn with her launch of an all-out populist challenge to the party leadership.

Mrs Mandela, who is still facing investigation by the

Truth and Reconciliation Commission for her alleged involvement in at least eight murders and is facing a rash of legal demands over her non-payment of various debts, has correctly divined that President Mandela's heir-apparent, Thabo Mbeki, the current ANC deputy president, is doing all he can to block her bid. She has in effect now taken him on. In a

dramatic series of moves, Mrs Mandela has accused the ANC leadership of being in league with other political parties against her and of having betrayed its 1994 election promises. Mrs Mandela — well aware that opinion polls show a big majority of black South Africans in favour of bringing back the death penalty (abolished by the ANC) and bitterly hostile to the illegal immigrants competing for scarce jobs — asked why the Government was not doing more to stop the influx, especially from Mozambique, and called for a referendum on capital punishment, making it clear that she favours its return.

Both of these accusations are unconvincing to ANC leaders, who have been keen to sweep such issues under the carpet. Mrs Mandela also criticises the Government for failing to implement a constituency-based parliamentary system, for operating affirmative-action policies "based on nepotism rather than merit", for failing to heed left-wing and trade union criticism of its economic policy and for fail-



Mbeki: threatened

ing so badly to deliver the houses it promised to blacks.

She points out, moreover, that many of the houses the Government has built are one-room affairs — "matchbox houses", she calls them — to which buyers are expected to add on. Mrs Mandela says that such housing is far inferior to the township houses built during the apartheid years.

No one doubts that the ANC leadership is vulnerable to grassroots criticism on all these issues and that, by

putting herself at the head of the expected populist backlash, Mrs Mandela has probably strengthened her chances. Mrs Mbeki's office — already deeply threatened by her challenge — has reacted by trying to force Matthews Phosa, the ANC premier of Mpumalanga province, to give up his bid for the deputy presidency so that the anti-Winnie vote can be rallied behind the establishment candidate, Jacob Zuma.

This tactic — revealed by a furious Mrs Mandela — has backfired as the popular and able Mr Phosa has refused to stand down. He is clearly resentful of Mr Mbeki's leadership and could even end up by swinging some of his support behind Mrs Mandela.

Mr Mbeki will not have forgotten that at the last ANC conference in 1992 he suffered the humiliation of being shouted down from the floor; such occasions are not his strength, as he is distinctly lacking in grassroots appeal or charisma. He will be relying heavily on Nelson Mandela, the retiring party president, to use his own huge popularity against

his ex-wife. Mr Mandela, however, has shown a strong disinclination to get involved in any matter pertaining to Mrs Mandela. Moreover, thanks to his impending visit to Libya, he has troubles enough of his own at present.

The ANC has accordingly decided to try to strangle all such challenges by proposing an amendment to its constitution, according to which anyone who runs or even campaigns against a candidate for office who has been "duly endorsed" by the party leadership will be automatically expelled.

This draconian attempt to stifle democracy is bound to draw scathing criticism not only from other parties but from many within the ANC ranks. This Soviet-style discipline stems essentially from the former exiles who now dominate the upper level of ANC leadership. This contrasts sharply with the more democratic customs of the mass anti-apartheid movement inside the country and risks creating new fissures from which Mrs Mandela can only benefit.



Mrs Mandela: calling for return of death penalty

Jermyn Street quality at affordable prices

Our 32 page *Men's Classics* catalogue is filled with items of clothing that are superior in quality, value and style. We use the finest fabrics and workmanship the world can offer and our attention to detail is impeccable.

Yet, despite all this, you do not have to pay Jermyn Street prices. By dealing direct, we avoid London's expensive West End overheads and pass the benefit on to you in the form of affordable prices. And to make the value even more irresistible, as a special introductory offer, I have deducted 10% from the current catalogue prices.

Wide range
Featured here are some of the many items in our *Autumn and Winter Classics* catalogue. Our cotton shirts are made from pure

two-fold 100s and 140s cotton poplin, fabrics chosen by the world's most famous shirtmakers. Its rich lustre and silken feel make it cool and comfortable to wear all year round.

Choice of sleeve lengths
And by offering a choice of up to 7 sleeve lengths we ensure that your shirts fit you perfectly. This, combined with generous cut, the longest tails you will find and superb finishing, brings you a shirt which will rival the finest made-to-measure shirt you can buy anywhere.

Whether it be shirts, knitwear including luxurious two-ply Scottish Cashmere, trousers, jackets, suits, outdoor wear or nightwear that you are looking for, it is all here in *Men's Classics* and all made from the very finest materials.

Every item is backed by our guarantee of your satisfaction. So don't delay, order your FREE catalogue today, to take advantage of our introductory offer.

JAMES MEADE LIMITED

01264 333222

Simply complete this coupon and send it to: James Meade Limited, FREEPOST (SN 1676), Andover, Hampshire, SP10 3BR, and we will send you your FREE catalogue

☐ Men's Classics
BMTTR

☐ Women's Classics
BWTTR

☐ Both BMTTR
Or telephone us on

01264 333222, or fax this

coupon to us on 01264 363280 - do it today to take advantage of our special introductory offer.

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss Title) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel No _____

If you do not wish to receive mail from other companies, please tick here.

British warning to Sierra Leone junta

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

IN a signal ahead of the Commonwealth summit that Britain is committed to a new moral foreign policy, the Government yesterday told Sierra Leone's government-in-exile that it had taken a "clear moral stand" against the military rulers in Freetown.

Lending unusual support to a government-in-exile, Britain offered a platform in London to politicians ousted in the May coup and will invite President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to the Commonwealth summit in Edinburgh, which begins on Friday. Tony Lloyd, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, told the meeting that the message to the junta's representative to the summit will be: "Get out while the possibility of doing so peacefully still remains."

He added: "It is essential

that we do not forget, and that the world understand, the kind of people we are dealing with. The military junta can be clear that there is no government to whom it can look for support in the region, any more than in the wider world."

He promised that Britain would give the legitimate Government whatever help it needed to get the country back on its feet, once it was returned to power. Mr Kabbah said of Britain: "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

The junta's leaders have agreed to send a delegation to a meeting in Guinea tomorrow to resume talks on restoring democracy. At least 10,000 people have fled Freetown since Nigerian jets began bombing targets there in an attempt to oust the junta.

Motor Insurance Over £250?

Stay cool! Call us NOW and you could save money. We'll shop around to find you the right cover at the right price.

0345 123111

All Calls Charged at Local Rate

Ask for a quote on the internet: <http://www.hhh.co.uk>

Hill House Hammond

Over 250 Branches Nationwide



THE TIMES/DILLONS FORUM

An evening with P.D. James

P.D. James, Britain's most popular crime novelist, will discuss her highly successful career, her life as a writer and her characters, including the famous Commander Adam Dalgleish — the subject of a major TV series — in *The Times/Dillons Forum* on Thursday, October 23. Chaired by Peter Stothard, Editor of *The Times*, the forum also offers the opportunity for the audience to put questions to Suzanne James. The forum marks the publication of her new book *A Certain Justice* (Faber and Faber £15.99) and will be held at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1 at 7.30pm. Tickets are £10 (concession £7.50) which includes £2 off the price of the book. Subject to demand this event will be interpreted by sign language.

THE TIMES/DILLONS FORUM

Please send me _____ tickets @ £10 each (£7.50 concessions) for *The Times/Dillons P.D. James Forum* on Thursday, October 23, at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

DAY PHONE No _____ POSTCODE _____

I enclose my cheque made payable to Dillons the Bookstore

Value £ _____ Cheque number _____

(Please write your name and address on the back of the cheque)

Or, please debit my Credit / Bank Debit / Dillons account card number _____

Expiry date _____ / _____ Switch issue number _____

PRINT NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

Please tick this box if you require a sign language interpreter ☐

Post coupon and remittance to: *The Times/Dillons P.D. James Forum*, Dillons, 52 Gower Street, London WC1E 6BQ

Tel: 0171-467 1613, Fax: 0171-467 1690, E-mail: orders@pwww.dillons.org.uk

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Ticket number _____ Date sent _____



Versatile country jacket supplied to James Meade by Grenfell



Stylish blazer supplied to James Meade by Aquascutum

Blast has dream of for Sri Lanka

Israeli mother

Interest in Time Mac

2 Years Interest Free Credit

0800

Blast has killed dream of peace for Sri Lanka

A LORRY bomb that shattered the heart of Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital, last week appears to have sealed the fate of a faltering peace initiative designed to give Tamils something close to their dream of an independent homeland.

The blast killed 18 people and wounded more than 100, including some British holidaymakers. Now three years of political optimism have evaporated; almost nobody doubts the war will go on.

The Government, headed by President Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, is due to introduce a White Paper to parliament this month detailing its proposals for substantial devolution to the regions, principally to give the Tamil minority control over areas where they are concentrated. But it has little chance of gaining enough opposition support to become law.

Pressure on parliamentary time means the proposals cannot be debated until early next year. Legislation will require a two-thirds majority to change the Constitution and radically alter the country's administrative and political structure. The opposition United National Party has not committed itself, which seems tantamount to rejection.

The Government intends to hold a referendum on the proposals. It has a one-vote

Tamil ambitions seem doomed, says Christopher

Thomas in Colombo

parliamentary majority, giving the Opposition the power of veto. The Government's opponents say no peace plan can work without the involvement of the Tigers, who have expressed no interest.

The rebels are effectively the only voice of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. They have eliminated all important rivals and silenced any public opposition in the Tamil community with the threat of assassination. Tamil MPs and commentators are forced to operate in what is now an intellectual vacuum, making it difficult for the Government to assess the mood of the minority community, who are 18 per cent of the population.

The rebels have never negotiated in good faith or demonstrated any readiness to accept a solution falling short of their demand for a homeland, called Eelam, in the north and east of the island. Seventy per cent of Sri Lanka's Tamils live there, and any eventual peace

solution will have to address the fears of hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Sinhalese Buddhists who live in the east.

Non-Tamils have reason to fear "ethnic cleansing": the Tigers drove out 90,000 Muslims from the northern Jaffna peninsula in 1987 and Muslims in the east continue to be harassed.

The apparent hopelessness of the political process is matched by a costly stalemate in the military battle to open a road link from Jaffna to the south, which has cost the lives of an estimated 800 government troops since it was launched in May. So far, 12 miles of road have been captured. The front lines have not changed in some weeks, and some government officials are worried by the human and material cost of the operation. The annual defence budget is £600 million — a fifth of the Government's total income.

Sri Lanka is looking to Britain to follow America in naming the Tamil Tigers as a terrorist organisation and banning it. The rebels' huge worldwide empire has its headquarters in London, the heart of its propaganda machine. Sri Lanka estimates that expatriate Tamils in Britain — many own garages and other businesses and a number are lawyers and doctors — contribute £250,000 a month to



President Kumaratunga has little chance of gaining opposition votes for reforms

the Tigers, equivalent to 20 per cent of their presumed worldwide income.

Liam Fox, a junior Foreign Minister in the former Conservative Government, brokered a political breakthrough last year under which both main political parties prom-

ised not to undermine any deal between the Tigers and Colombo, provided each side was kept informed.

Twenty-four countries have offered to act as mediators in any peace talks. But, after the rebels broke the last ceasefire in April 1995, all channels of

communications broke down. Neelan Tiruchelvam, a respected Tamil MP, said: "In most conflicts, however bitter, there are normally some subterranean lines of communication. But here there are none. Nobody really knows what the Tigers are thinking."

Israeli mothers launch 'quit Lebanon' protest



Netanyahu: under fire

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

A POWERFUL new Israeli protest movement of soldiers' mothers has launched demonstrations urging a military withdrawal from Lebanon, after the toll of troops killed there this year rose at the weekend to 38.

Standing near a military gate to the self-styled "security zone" which Israel has occupied since a partial withdrawal from Lebanon in 1985, scores of Jewish women waved at soldiers crossing the border in convoy. Many held signs saying "Leave Lebanon in peace".

Named the Four Mothers move-

ment, the protest group has mushroomed since it was founded after 73 soldiers died in a helicopter crash in February. The helicopters involved in the mid-air collision were ferrying troops to duty in Lebanon where the pro-Iranian group Hezbollah is waging war against the Israeli presence.

"We have lost far too many soldiers over the years, and the Four Mothers movement is asking the Government to withdraw unilaterally in order to defend ourselves like every other country does," said Linda Ben-Zvi.

Mrs Ben-Zvi claimed that the "security zone" had proved a liability which did not prevent guerrilla rocket attacks on Israel, usually carried out in

retaliation for Israeli strikes at Lebanese civilian centres.

The group is reminiscent of an earlier Israeli campaign against involvement in Lebanon launched after the 1982 invasion to drive out the PLO.

Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, said yesterday it had honoured two members who last month helped to thwart a murder attempt on Khaled Meshaal, one of its leaders, by a hit squad sent to Jordan by Mossad, Israel's secret service.

Hamas said that the two men, Mr Meshaal's driver and bodyguard, were felled at a party and presented with money and tickets for a pilgrimage to Mecca for their courage in helping to

save his life when two Mossad men attacked him with a deadly poison.

Relations between Jordan and Israel, severely strained by the decision of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, to allow the attack to proceed on Jordanian territory, remained tense yesterday after Amman protested officially to Israel over an attack on one of its diplomatic residences in Tel Aviv by what it said were Jewish extremists.

Beirut: Gunmen with silenced pistols killed Omar al-Banna, a relative of Abu Nidal, the Palestinian terrorist leader, and wounded another here. Police believe the attack was part of factional Palestinian fighting. (AP)

Interest Free Time Machine

The Interest Free Time Machine is a high specification state of the art PC system with fast 200+ processor, 32Mb Ultra ATA hard drive, 32Mb EDO RAM, 24 speed CD, 3D Waveable sound, 4Mb SIS graphics and 56K voice Modem. It also includes colour video camera interface, videophone receive software, IBM GOLD voice recognition, microphone, joystick and massive software bundle all at a truly incredible price.

With Interest Free Credit spread over 2 years with easy monthly payments of just £28 per month (which works out to less than £1 per day), you will not find a better deal anywhere. Buy it Now! Order early this week and receive a FREE Colour Inkjet Printer (strictly limited to first 1500 orders)

Top Spec

- ✓ 200+ Processor
- ✓ 32Mb Ram
- ✓ 4.3Gb Hard drive
- ✓ 56k modem
- ✓ 24x CD-ROM
- ✓ 4Mb SIS Graphics
- ✓ Videophone Receive
- ✓ Speech Recognition
- ✓ Massive Software Bundle
- ✓ FREE PRINTER (limited to first 1500 only)



0% 2 Years Interest Free Credit

STOP PRESS FREE PRINTER

First 1500 orders only. All Time Machine models ordered early qualify for a free Epson Stylus Colour 300 720dpi Inkjet printer.



Additional software (limited offer)



37 Time Showrooms

Freephone Time Now!

0800 77 11 07

Offer Must End 25th October

COMPUTER SYSTEMS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Soros pledges £300m to assist needy Russians

Moscow: George Soros, the billionaire financier, yesterday outlined one of the most ambitious charitable projects of the post-Cold War era, when he pledged more than £300 million to help needy Russians (Richard Beeston writes). Speaking in Moscow, where he is established as one of the largest foreign investors, the Hungarian-born businessman said the thrust of his project was to assist the country's ailing healthcare and education systems, as well as the demoralised armed forces. Indirectly, the funding is aimed at assisting President Yeltsin's reform-led Government, which has three years to the next election.

Tirana drops genocide case

Tirana: A court here acquitted the former Communist President, Ramiz Alia, right, and three other senior officials of genocide and crimes against humanity. State prosecutors had dropped the charges because they were not part of Albania's legislation under the former Communist government. Mr Alia, successor to the Stalinist dictator Enver Hoxha, is believed to be living in Paris. (AP)

Pastor charged with murder

Brussels: A 70-year-old Hungarian-born Protestant pastor, Andreas Pandi, has been charged with the murder of two of his former wives and four of his eight children and may have had other victims, the Brussels prosecutor's office said. Investigators found a human leg, a hip and skull pieces under a concrete floor in one of the pastor's properties in a Brussels suburb. (AFP)

Machel 'poisoned after crash'

Johannesburg: South Africa has reopened an inquiry into the death of Samora Machel, Mozambique's President, in a 1986 air crash because of new evidence pointing to murder. The Sapa news agency said that when Machel's plane crashed in South Africa a doctor was sent to the scene, found the Marxist leader alive and poisoned him. (AFP)

Solidarity in coalition deal

Warsaw: The conservative Solidarity bloc and the liberal Freedom Union have struck a compromise to form a coalition Government. Solidarity will control the Treasury and Social Policy Ministry, pursuing pension reform founded on mass privatisation. Jerzy Buzek, 57, designated Prime Minister, is expected to announce his Cabinet by Friday. (Reuters)

Police sting scorpion sellers

Pretoria: South African police smashed a smuggling syndicate with links to Europe and the United States, seizing 150 snakes, 185 scorpions and scores of birds destined to become illegal pets. Seven suspects were arrested. Codenamed Operation Cobra, the raids across the country followed a two-year undercover inquiry by the police's endangered species protection unit. (Reuters)

Amnesty for airline thieves

Johannesburg: South African Airways has offered thieves staff an amnesty if they return stolen property within the next month after several employees were arrested in connection with the loss of items worth millions of rands (Niggo Gilmore writes). One staff member was jailed for stealing a 300,000 rands (£40,000) forklift truck which he drove out of an airport at the end of work.

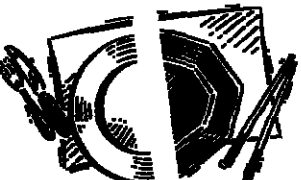
Flying to Japan? With ANA First or Club Class you can relax all the way.



Chauffeur limousine services to and from Heathrow.



Exclusive lounges providing privacy and comfort.



A choice of Western or traditional Japanese cuisine.



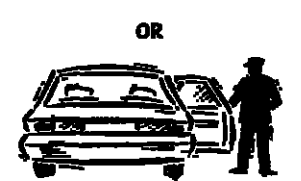
Unique fully reclining First Class seats with an 83" pitch and in Club an equally impressive 50" seat pitch and "Super Relax" recline. Both with built-in entertainment centres.

Plus

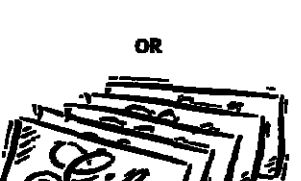
The choice of one of the following benefits.*



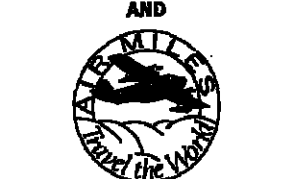
One night's complimentary stay and reduced rates for subsequent nights in ANA hotels.



A complimentary limousine from both Kansai Airport to Central Osaka or Narita to Central Tokyo.



Free Eurostar or Department Store gift vouchers including Harrods.



Collect AIR MILES awards.

ANA
Air Nippon Airways
JAPAN'S BEST TO THE WORLD

To book or for further information contact your local travel agent or call 0345 262 262.

*Conditions apply. Collect AIR MILES awards through British Airways Executive Club. AIR MILES and the Flying Blue logo are trademarks of AIR MILES International Holdings B.V. AIR MILES Awards are held and issued for use subject to AIR MILES Customer Terms and Conditions.

Carter adds to pressure on Reno

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX
IN WASHINGTON

JIMMY CARTER, the former American President, has added his voice to those pressing Janet Reno, the Attorney-General, to appoint an independent counsel to investigate President Clinton's political fundraising.

Mr Carter, the last Democrat President before Mr Clinton, said accusations of murky fundraising had given the "not always erroneous" impression that to get help from Washington, "you've got to contribute money and a so-called legal bribe". The former President blamed both parties for that impression, adding that a full investigation would allow the Administration to get on with its business.

But his televised comments late on Sunday added fuel to Republican excitement that the long-running investigations by Congress and the Justice Department may finally lead to an independent counsel being appointed. Ms Reno must decide by December 2 whether to bring in a special investigator, who would examine if Mr Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore infringed campaign finance laws.

Jiang hits back at American rights activists

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

IN A rare series of interviews with foreign journalists, President Jiang Zemin of China yesterday called for a new level of co-operation between Washington and Beijing, attempting to defuse criticism by human rights activists of his visit to America this weekend.

In a move clearly designed to smooth the path for the first state visit to America by a Chinese leader since the Tiananmen Square massacre, Mr Jiang urged Americans to seek common ground with Beijing despite differences over rights, Taiwan and Tibet. He said both nations shared "the responsibility for preserving world peace and stability".

His interviews with *Time* magazine and *The Washington Post* came as United States officials in Beijing hinted that China may be persuaded to free a number of jailed dissidents on medical parole, including Wei Jingsheng and Wang Dang, the celebrated activists both nominated for this year's Nobel Peace Prize. The concerted public relations effort by the Chinese and the White House in advance of the visit is intended to show signs of reconciliation and to thaw the sometimes glacial diplomacy that has existed between

the two countries since the army brutally quelled the pro-democracy uprising in 1989.

Although Mr Jiang said Wei and Wang were no threat to stability in his country, he continued to describe them as "common criminals". His steadfast support of China's policy in the Tiananmen Square massacre, over Taiwan and in Tibet will only further fuel activists in America who are planning to make his tour one of the most controversial visits in history.

Richard Gere, Harrison Ford, Uma Thurman and

Sharon Stone, the film stars, are planning a "stateless" banquet for Tibet to coincide with the White House state feast. A series of Hollywood films about the Himalayan region, including last week's release of *Seven Years in Tibet*, has heightened public awareness of the issue and Mr Jiang is expected to receive a hostile reception during a planned address at Harvard.

The Chinese leader gave assurances that he would continue with economic reform but said that Beijing must limit the scope of direct democratic participation in order to ensure stability and economic progress.

"The theory of relativity worked out by Albert Einstein, which is the domain of natural science, I believe can also be applied to the political field," he said.

"Both democracy and human rights are relative concepts and not absolute and general. One country's human rights situation cannot be separated from the actual conditions of that country... I hope the West understands that our primary issue is to assure that all Chinese people have adequate access to food and clothing."



Jiang: faces protests over rights abuses



Craig Brown pouring water from the Pacific Ocean into the Indian Ocean near Perth yesterday where he celebrated his record-breaking walk across Australia

Triumph for two walkabout Britons

BY ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY
AND SIMON DE BRUCELLES

TWO Britons who decided to walk across Australia, without realising the other was embarking on the same journey, have arrived in Perth less than 18 hours apart.

In the process they both smashed the previous record for the fastest crossing of Australia on foot.

Craig Brown, 23, a publican from Chichester and former trooper in the Household Cavalry, broke the 95-day record set by Fiona Campbell, the English walker, in 1988 by 18 days. Debi Reader, 36, a Manchester graduate, was just behind him. Mr Brown, who runs the Old Spot pub, began his walk a day after Miss Reader left Bondi Beach in Sydney, but caught up and passed her to complete the 2,761-mile walk in 77 days.

Mr Brown's girlfriend, Julie England, who ran the Old Spot while he was away, said: "I spoke to him just after he finished and he was over the moon." His eventual target is to break the round-the-world walking record of four years to cover 15,000 miles.

Miss Reader said she was amazed when she heard that another Briton was walking the same route.

"My first reaction was total astonishment that anyone could be stupid enough to attempt it, but I realised he was British and that made more sense," she said.

Gaullist



Crashing come
calded disaster
life on Earth

Sex expert Kinsey 'was a repressed homosexual'

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

ALFRED KINSEY, the earliest architect of the sexual revolution, was not the ascetic scientist many believed him to be, but was instead a "repressed homosexual" who had a hidden liberationist agenda, according to a book published here this week.

In *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life*, James Jones, professor of history at the University of Houston, argues that Dr Kinsey, far from being a dispassionate scholar, was "a deeply troubled man" who wanted to create "an ethic of tolerance" toward a wide variety of human behaviour — including his own homosexuality, bisexuality and interest in extra-marital sex.

Professor Jones contends that much of Dr Kinsey's work was motivated by a desire to loosen up America, and to make it a better place to live in for people like himself, and for

others with sexual doubts and discomfort.

In fact, the scientific jargon, the dense statistics and Kinsey's apparently dispassionate "samplings" may have been no more than an elaborate Trojan horse for this "hidden agenda".

Dr Kinsey's reputation rests on two studies which are credited with changing the way that America, hitherto puritanical, came to view its own sexual activity.

His *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male*, published in 1948 and dubbed *The Kinsey Report*, and his *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female*, which was released five years later, shook Americans with their many and varied disclosures.

The findings included the "fact" that almost all American men had pre-marital sex and that more than half of all married men were unfaithful

to their wives. Most disconcerting of all, however, to a society then still steeped in what might be called the "John Wayne school" of male-male, was Dr Kinsey's assertion that more than a third of all American men had had at least one homosexual experience. But Americans tended to believe him.

Professor Jones reveals that, as a young man, Dr Kinsey's father had not allowed him to smoke, drink or date women.

The professor points out that Dr Kinsey's credibility rested on an elaborate public image. The path-breaking "sexologist" always took great pains to emphasise his background as an entomologist who used to study wasps, and his "weedy" side, his family, and his status as a middle-class American Everyman.

□ *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life*, by James Jones, W. W. Norton, \$39.95.



Compared with the shots you can take with the Dimage V, other digital cameras simply don't get a look in. Literally. Because unlike any other digital camera in

the world, the Dimage V lens can be used remotely, when

connected by its 1 metre umbilical cord. Allowing you to get into all manner of places. Exactly where, is probably best left to your own imagination.

Just place the lens

where you want it and what you can't see with the naked eye, you can see, record and play back, on the camera's colour LCD finder monitor.

Combine this with a lens that can rotate a full 180 degrees when it's on the camera, plus a built-in flash to throw some light on the subject and naturally, auto exposure and you really do have it made.

And the advantages don't stop there.

The Dimage V has a 2.7x zoom lens (equivalent to 34mm - 92mm) and Macro, which lets you get as close as 6cms to an object the size of a standard business card.

So as well as being able to get in close,

you also have the additional advantage of being able to zoom in as well. Allowing you to get the exact shot you want. First time. Without having to use your computer to zoom in and consequently, suffer loss of resolution to picture quality.

As one of the world's great camera manufacturers, picture quality is something pretty close to our hearts, and something many of our competitors choose to ignore.

For example, unfortunately, many of them still use the same rectangular pixel CCD that's used for video. And because this rectangular system has to be converted, the quality of the pictures inevitably suffer.

The Dimage V on the other hand, has

its very own 350k square pixel CCD, which means your pictures can be transferred to your computer with absolute minimal loss of image quality.

And the Dimage V unlike most other digital cameras has a removable SmartMedia Compact Memory Card. Allowing all your shots to be stored on any number of cards. So you're not limited by a finite built-in memory. Other cameras have to store the information by massively compressing the data with a resultant loss

of picture quality.

The Dimage V's 2MB card will hold sixteen 'fine' images or forty 'standard' and there's an optional 4MB card available. And because the cards are

removable, there's absolutely no limit to the number of shots you can take and store.

And all you need to take advantage of this amazing little camera is a PC (running Windows 95) or a Mac, with 16MB of RAM and CD Rom drive.

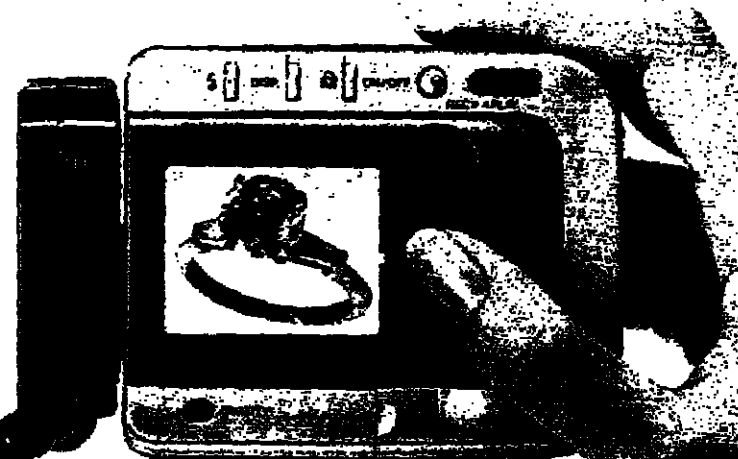
And when you buy a Dimage V you get absolutely everything you need to hook up to your PC or Mac and download your pictures.

All this in a digital camera that costs just £599.99 including VAT.

It's available at most good camera retailers so you won't need a roving eye to track one down.

Just a finger to ring freephone 0800 731 6810 for the name of the one nearest to you.

The new Dimage V.

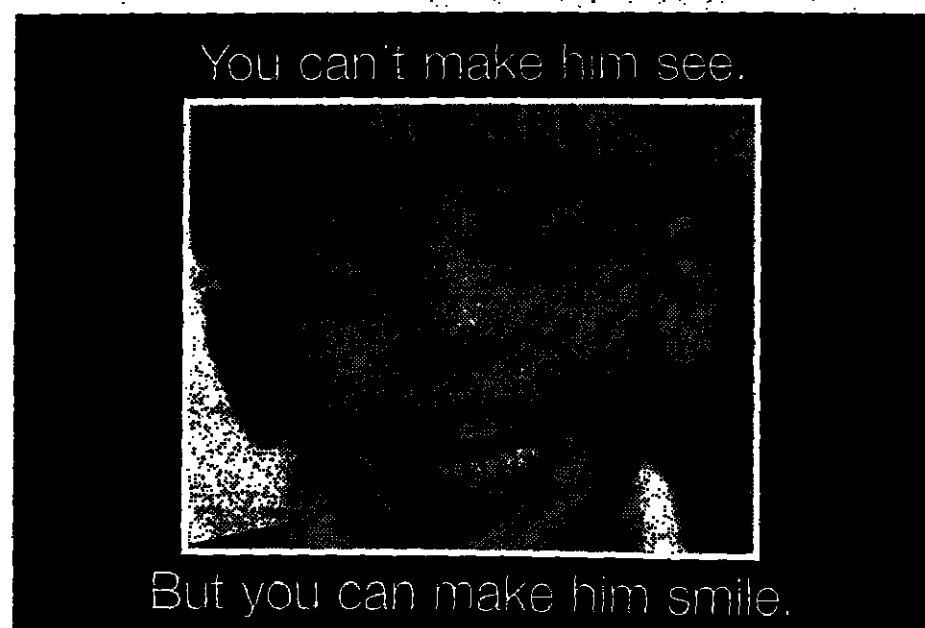


Only from the mind of Minolta.

Dimage

Minolta (UK) Limited, Proccent Drive, Rookley, Milnrow, Lancashire, MK13 3HF.

"Dimage" is a trademark of Minolta Co Ltd. "Windows" is a registered trademark of Microsoft Co. "Mac" is an abbreviation of "Macintosh" the registered trademark of Apple Computer.



It's not James who has a problem with being blind. It's the world in which he lives.

So to help him live as a blind person in a sighted world, the Royal National Institute for the Blind is teaching James vital skills like braille at one of our special Sunshine Schools for blind children.

£15 helps pay for a child's first crucial lesson in braille. Make a blind child smile. Please send a gift today.

Yes I want to help. I enclose: £15 ☐ Other £ ☐

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____ Initials _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Please make your cheque payable to RNIB Charity or please debit the above amount from my: MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ CAF CharityCard ☐

Card No.

Expiry date ____/____/____ Today's date ____/____/____

Signature _____

☐ Please tick if you would prefer us not to pass your name on to other reputable charities and organisations.

Return to: RNIB, FREEPOST (WD 3414/2), LONDON E1 8BR

RNIB
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Reg Charity No. 208727

Gaullist urges end to Vichy guilt feelings



De Gaulle speaking at Bordeaux prefecture in October 1944 watched by Maurice Papon, next in line and looking towards camera. M Papon, a senior Vichy official in the city, is now accused of crimes against humanity.

THE leader of the French Gaullist party has condemned the "self-flagellation" surrounding the trial of Maurice Papon, the accused collaborator with the Nazis, claiming that de Gaulle himself had been put in the dock.

"The Papon trial is serving as a pretext for a trial aimed against General de Gaulle and Gaullism, and the trial of France itself," Philippe Séguin, head of the Gaullist RPR party, said.

M Séguin insisted that the atmosphere of soul-searching and historical reappraisal provoked by the trial of M Papon was "morbid" and unnecessary.

"Let us be proud to be French. We do not need to blush for what happened between 1940 and 1944... our country's record was not immaculate, but we have nothing to be ashamed of," the RPR leader, whose father was killed during the liberation of France, said.

M Séguin's remarks were intended as a rebuke to Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the far-right National Front, who had attacked de Gaulle's wartime role in exile as founder of the Free French

Ben Macintyre writes that Papon's trial has provoked attacks on France's mood of 'self-flagellation'

movement, noting: "It was easier to be in the resistance in London than in Paris."

But M Séguin's comments were also a direct criticism of President Chirac, the founder of the RPR, who admitted French responsibility over the deportation of Jews during the war just a few months after he was elected. Relations between M Chirac and M Séguin, who is a likely presidential candidate, are arctic.

M Papon, a former senior official in the Vichy regime, is accused of deporting hundreds of Jews to Nazi death camps, and his trial has prompted a wave of national introspection and recrimination, much of it directed at de Gaulle for promoting M Papon after the war and for attempting to gloss over the past — a tradition continued until the election of M Chirac.

M Séguin's insistence that the crimes committed under Vichy should not be blamed

the Roman Catholic Church, lawyers, police and doctors.

M Séguin said this had caused a "climate of collective guilt... self-flagellation which some French people are getting tired of". He accused historians of "putting France on trial, by making her an accomplice to German abominations".

The RPR leader also suggested darkly that public opinion was being "manipulated" by using the Papon trial to denigrate both de Gaulle and the party founded in his name.

□ Bordeaux M Papon said yesterday that he never signed any arrest warrants for Jews to be sent off en route to Nazi death camps, and defied prosecutors to produce evidence that he did so.

"I cannot let it be said that I myself sent orders for transfer to the Drancy centre," he said, referring to the transit centre at Drancy, north of Paris, where Jews were gathered before being sent to Nazi death camps.

"When the time comes, I will ask for the evidence to be produced showing that I gave arrest orders," M Papon said. (AFP)



M Papon yesterday

'Crashing comet' heralded disaster for life on Earth

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

WAVES 1,000ft high swept across the oceans 370 million years ago, heralding one of the greatest disasters in the history of life.

The cataclysm was triggered by the impact of a comet more than half a mile wide, which gouged a 190-mile crater on the sea bed of what is now the state of Nevada, a meeting of the Geological Society of America in Salt Lake City was told yesterday.

Dr Charles Sandberg, of the US Geological Survey, said that the comet ripped apart a reef on the continental shelf and carried chunks of it as much as half-a-mile wide over much of southern Nevada.

With Doctors John Warner, of the Colorado School of Mines, and Jared Morrow, of the University of Colorado, he has studied the impact. It occurred three million years before the Devonian extinction — one of the five great extinctions marking the history of life on Earth.

The species that vanished were largely ocean-based, with little impact on terrestrial plants, and their disappearance has usually been attributed to an episode of global

cooling that killed many warm-water species.

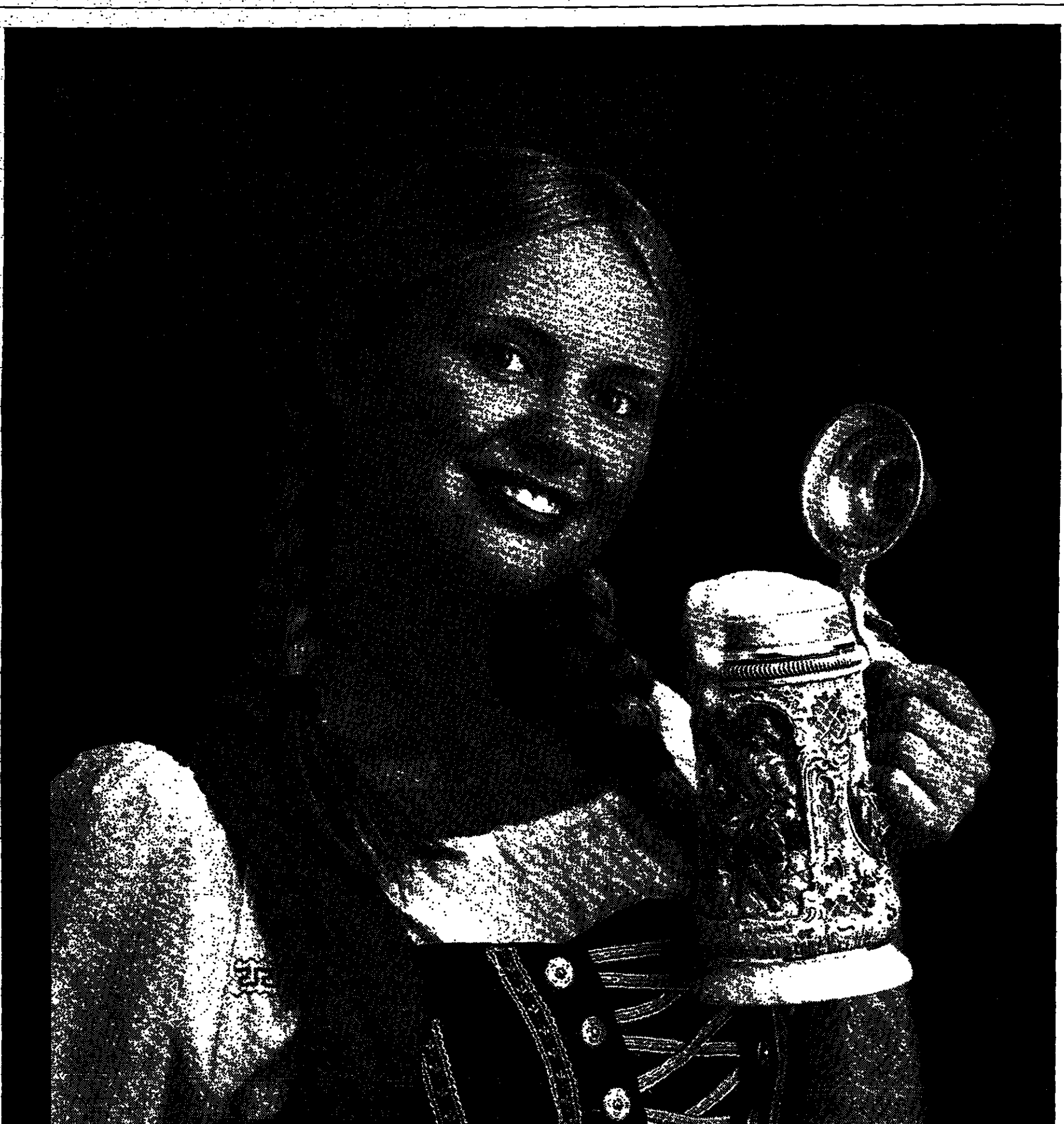
Among the hardest-hit were reef-building creatures such as corals. Seventy per cent of marine invertebrates did not survive and many fish were killed.

Dr Sandberg said that discoveries in other countries in recent years suggested there had been numerous such impacts within a few million years, causing the climatic change that led to the Devonian extinction.

He also said that the mass extinctions were caused by impacts from outer-space bodies, in support in recent years, but there are still plenty of sceptics.

□ Auckland: Scientists in Antarctica say they have recovered rock core samples from 500ft below the sea that will reveal climatic conditions dating back 30 to 100 million years.

Fifty-one scientists from 28 institutions around the world are analysing and describing the samples recovered by a drill team working at Cape Roberts, 87 miles north of New Zealand's Scott Base on the edge of the Ross Sea. (AP)



Wunderbar! We've got 900,000 AIR MILES up for grabs.

Two thousand lucky people are going to win 450 AIR MILES awards each. That's enough to fly

return to Paris or Brussels from London.

Carry on collecting and you could get to Munich, Frankfurt or Hanover.

What's more, this pair of credit cards has a

fantastic monthly interest rate of just 0.95%, for new card customers. That's 12% APR for a full

Call 0800 616 848

MONDAY TO FRIDAY 9.00am TO 6.00pm, SATURDAYS 9.00am TO 6.00pm

twelve months. So, sehr gut!

And not only are NatWest MasterCard and

NatWest Visa fee free for the first year, you can also collect more miles at home and abroad.

To take advantage of this unbeatable offer,

simply apply for a NatWest Combined Card Account and enter our competition.

Call 0800 616 848 for details and apply today.

NatWest
More than just a bank



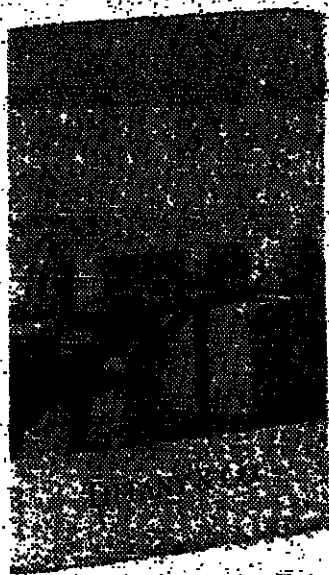
Renewing your home insurance in October or November and want to save money?

If you are 50 or over call free!

0800 414 525

quoting reference TMO706

from Monday to Friday 9.00am - 7pm, Saturdays 9.00am - 7pm



Strategic Planning

Now is the time to order your holiday business gifts. Tiffany corporate gift consultants offer many ways to express your thanks to clients and colleagues. For assistance and a copy of our "Corporate Holiday Gifts" catalogue, please call 0171 408 2271.

TIFFANY & CO.

FOR ALL CORPORATE ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL 0171 408 2271
FOR ALL OTHER ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL 0171 209 2700

THE 12% APR IS FIXED UNTIL 30 NOVEMBER 1998. CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS 2 NOVEMBER 1997. CLOSING DATE FOR COMPETITION ENTRIES IS 15 NOVEMBER 1997. This offer is open to applications received by 2 November 1997. Cash is only available to persons over the age of majority and subject to status and conditions. Written quotations are available on request from National Westminster Bank Plc, 41 Leadenhall, London EC3A 3BP or from any branch. The APR for the NatWest Combined Card Account for the year commencing 1 January 1998 is 12.75% for each advance including the purchase of foreign currency and travellers' cheques (includes a cash handling fee of 1.5%, minimum charge £1.50). The APR is quoted on a credit basis of £1,000 and on the basis that no arrears are payable and the balance on the NatWest Combined Card Account is paid in full by the date of the next statement. After that date the annual fee, currently £12 for the Account, will be immediately payable and the monthly rate will revert to the NatWest Combined Card Account rate of 15.75% from 1 December 1998. If your outstanding balance on your monthly statement is less than £5, you must pay it all by the date shown on your statement. Otherwise you must pay the greater of £5 or 3% of the balance. There is an administration fee of 2.75% of the amount of each foreign currency transaction. Until 30 November 1998 only the cash handling fee and administration fee may vary. From 1 December 1998, the monthly interest rate, the annual fee and the cash handling fee and administration fee may vary. AIR MILES and the Flying Boot Logo are trademarks of AIR MILES International Holdings N.V. AIR MILES awards are held and issued for use subject to AIR MILES Customer Terms and Conditions and the NatWest AIR MILES Scheme Terms and Conditions. AIR MILES Travel Promotions Limited, Regent Office, Bells Way, London Road, Croydon, West Sussex RH10 2DA, Tel. No. 20017.

'Having a baby should be treated not as an illness, but as part of life'

A pioneering scheme of care in pregnancy and childbirth is under threat. Nigella Lawson reports

This is the usual pattern of childbirth. For the first baby you've read all the right books, heard all the right things being said, been fired up with all the right intentions — you insist on a drug-free labour. It's not just that "natural" sounds so much better — who, full of the joys of incipient motherhood, would beg for an unnatural childbirth? — but that the agonising pain of labour is unknowable, unimaginable in advance.

With your second baby, you know better. As every gynaecologist knows, as often as not the epidural is booked before the first tediously excruciating twinge dies down, well before the wolves start eating up your innards from within.

I differed. I had my first child in a 36-hour haze of threatened "caesars" and slow, grinding pain, beautifully blunted and brought to a happy conclusion by that wonderful thing, the mobile epidural. Afterwards, I wondered

how anyone ever had more than one child; though this, in truth, was probably more to do with the trauma of having a first baby than the shock of the birth itself.

But I did have a second baby. And I had it — him — differently: in hospital but with a midwife, without drugs and in an intense and wonderful atmosphere. This isn't a screed against doctors, by any means. But having a baby delivered by a midwife you know, who has assisted you throughout your pregnancy and will take care of you and the baby afterwards, is extraordinary. It isn't just about the labour, but about having a baby; there is a real difference. This is the scheme pioneered by Queen Charlotte's Hospital, in West London; a scheme now under threat of closure.

Of course, Queen Charlotte's itself — the country's leading maternity hospital — has been about to close for years. The latest rumours are that it will be moved into the



Nigella Lawson was having dinner in a local restaurant when she had the first contractions; she was back there having a celebratory lunch with hours-old Bruno the next day

Hammersmith Hospital nearby. All that is clear is that nothing is secure. But the "one-to-one midwife scheme" has been such a significant success that it seems strange even to imply that closure could be on the cards. The health authority and the hospital trust both (for somewhat different reasons) seem keen to play down this threat. On the whole, though, theirs is a semantic defence: it has been a "pilot scheme", therefore the implication is not that it will be closed, but simply not "rolled out" — same difference.

The importance of the

scheme is threefold. In the first instance, it is a huge improvement in maternity care, offering greater choice — that buzzword from the Eighties — and more sensitive treatment. In the second, it shows a whole different approach to pregnancy and childbirth, treating it not as an illness but as an integrated part of life. And in the third, it continues the pioneering work of Queen Charlotte's, work that like the mobile epidural which the hospital also introduced is studied and learnt from across the rest of the country and indeed the rest of the world. If

the Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow Health Authority decides that this is a service not worth providing, it sends out a clear negative signal to health authorities elsewhere which have been monitoring the scheme, and which must now (given its success) be perplexed by the threat of its imminent withdrawal.

There are obvious practical signs of the scheme's success: for one thing, women who have taken part feel much happier with the service they have received. They use expensive epidurals less, and stay in hospital for much shorter times on average, if at all.

These claims are supported by the midwives and the women who use them, although the health authority has recently contested many of them. I was having dinner in a local restaurant when I had the first contractions; I was back there having a celebratory lunch with hours-old Bruno the next day. What is more I felt wonderful: giving birth with a woman you know, without drugs, which, although they take away pain, do make you feel somewhat remote and depressed afterwards, and in such an intimate and positive setting seems to me the best way to set the mother and child, and therefore the family, on the right footing for life. These are irreplaceably important hours, days. The difference a maternity service can make to them is incalculable.

But as I said, I do not disparage medical approaches to labour. What is important about the one-to-one scheme is that it comes out of such a leading maternity hospital. I knew that I had the back-up of, in my case, Mr Malvern and Professor Fisk if any problems

presented themselves during pregnancy or labour. This is not some anti-scientific New Age "let's-all-trust-ourselves" approach to healthcare: it is a sensible route taken by a serious midwifery service which recognises that pregnancy is not an illness, and that there are many ways to manage a labour.

It is important to stress this, because the myth of a midwife as a doctor-hating individual who despises medicine and thinks women are wimps for opting for an epidural is a common one. But the strength of the Queen Charlotte's practice is that all methods are available. I wasn't pushed into having a drug-free childbirth, but it felt, as the labour progressed, like the most positive course to take.

It felt like that because of the quality of care. And that just cannot be duplicated in a normal hospital routine. I never would have thought I would have wanted a drug-free labour in advance. I couldn't have known that. But it was made possible for me, and for that I am immensely, passionately grateful. It makes a life-altering difference, and we are talking about more than one life here. I feel this is the sort of maternity care everyone should be able to have. I don't mean whether to go for the drugs or not, or the length of the labour (these are unknowables) but the whole attitude to, and treatment of, pregnancy in general.

I had, medically speaking, excellent care when I had my daughter, the normal way at Queen Charlotte's, but nevertheless it is less satisfactory to see a different person each time you go for an antenatal check-up and to have a series of midwives and other personnel coming in and out, off and

on duty, for the labour. Of course it makes a difference: and what is more it wouldn't be tolerated in any other healthcare department. Why should it seem acceptable for childbirth, for women?

Money, of course, is money. Those who wish to denigrate the scheme know the quickest way to silence its supporters is through financial argument. It just costs too much, they say. But the assessment of the scheme would seem to disagree: its findings are positive, for the reasons mentioned above, concerning use of drugs and take-up of beds. Obviously, such schemes cost a lot to set up. But the figures we are talking about do not seem — all things considered — very great. According to a spokesman for the Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust (which takes in Queen Charlotte's and Hammersmith hospitals) it would cost £250,000 to continue with the scheme as it is at present and an extra £300,000 to extend the scheme across the authority, and for all the women putatively in its care. Set against this the potential savings — in drugs, nursing hours, beds, doctors' visits and it doesn't seem like feeble extravagance.

I suspect it is partly the name of the scheme that

suggests such indulgence, such imprudence: one-to-one seems to imply that there is a different midwife for each woman. In fact they work in pairs, for back-up (Jenn Reid, my midwife, worked with Meg Beibitz: both attended me so both became known to me), and each midwife has a caseload of 40 women.

The government paper on maternity services, *Changing Childbirth*, stressed in 1992 the need to enhance continuity of care and to focus on the community rather than the hospital. This is the essence of the one-to-one scheme: and it shows that it works. Well, we have a different Government now, but it's hard to see that it could have different priorities, in this respect at least. For surely, this is what new Labour is all about: the modest shaping of attitudes within the community. When she was in Opposition, Tessa Jowell, the Public Health Minister, seemed to confirm this, describing the scheme as "the best model of practice". Perhaps it's time for her to send a memo to that effect, to remind health authorities that the words "new Labour" are not empty ones: that here more than anywhere else they mean what they say.

look

gaze

glance

observe

scan

study

search

watch

survey

peep

inspect

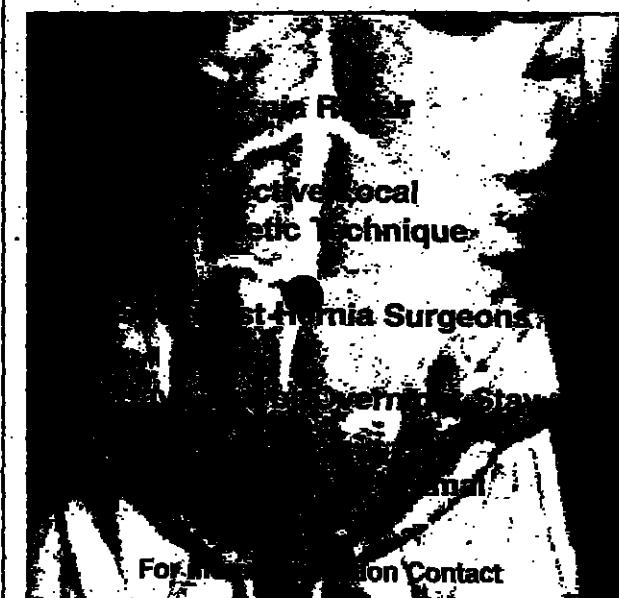
or participate

4-D

www.4-D.co.uk

Usually the epidural is booked before the first twinge dies down

The guys who brought you
Trainspotting turn their
attention to romantic comedy
Pages 35-37



THE LONDON HERNIA CENTRE
0171 328 1228

Beryl Bainbridge
on the last great
adventure

'Extraordinary... beautifully written'
— *Independent*

EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF
Winner of the Whitbread Novel Award

Hello Ma'am, I'm back: how to rejoin the royals

As Buckingham Palace leaks news of the Duchess of York's plea for forgiveness, Jane Shilling suggests that silence is her best plan

Well honestly, you'd probably ring up the Editor of *The Sun*, too, wouldn't you?

Imagine, there one is, just about to kick off one's shoes and sink on to the sofa with a nice cup of tea and a plate of Duxy Original ginger snaps when in comes the footman. Bowing low, he offers one a silver salver. On it, a slightly grubby envelope — printed with a curious coat of arms, supported by Budgie the Little Helicopter and one of his chums — bearing, on a bend sinister, the words Duch WorldCorp Enterprises, Inc. The envelope is addressed to "Mum and Dad".

"God," begins the letter inside, without preamble. "I am just SO sorry. I don't know how I could have done it. I mean, it was just such a major, major boo-boo. I totally, totally take responsibility for that. But I was in a really hurting place then, and it was just so amazing after, well, it happened, just to be with you all and feel your pain."

"So, the thing is, I was with Oprah the other day and she said, 'Honey, she's a Queen, but she's a woman too. She bleeds like you. Go to her, weep with her. Tell her about your shame and all your hurting. She's your kin, your hubby's ma. She'll want you back home where you belong...'"

"I thought that was so humbling. It just made me think that, it's like, my duty to be back there, with you and Dad, and Andrew and the girls, and Anne and Margaret and all the gang. Mum, it's been a long, hard journey, but I'm coming home..."

Well, desperate situations demand

desperate remedies. Lowering one's teacup to its saucer, one rings sharply for Simmonds. "Ask the Captain of the Guard to come and see me, would you?" one asks, with every appearance of calm. "And bring me the telephone number of the Editor of *The Sun*."

Poor Fergie. Like Queen Caroline, she simply does not get it. She dashes about, alternately crying real tears on network TV and popping on her tiara to tout her fearful book at a tycoon's tacky ball. And then she turns up at the Palace gates in her Shift of Penitence to make a Public Act of Contrition — oh, and by the way, is it OK if she comes back indoors now? It is hard to imagine anything more exquisitely calculated to make the Royal Family forget their divisions and reform the House of Windsor into the kind of impenetrable fortress that a Royal Family ought to be.

Lord knows why, having turned her back on it, the Duchess should wish once again to penetrate that fortress — what with the insights into her past mistakes and present character that we all know (because she keeps telling us about them in *Hello!* magazine) she has so painfully acquired.

But if she really *does* want to go back, all she has to do is move into the Dower House at South York and remain there, silent and invisible, for the rest of her natural life. She may not speak to the newspapers; she may not appear on the telly with Ruby Wax; she may not write any more books — the nation's children may be inconsolable, but there must be

no more adventures of cheeky little Budgie. All commercial activity will cease. Offers to organise the festive pantomime at Balmoral will be declined.

On no account will there be any more Spiritual Journeys — bye-bye Madame Vasso and all the other dodgy gurus. There will be, in fact, no more exotic holidays. Val d'Isère, Marbella, the Canaries, the Caribbean — henceforth the Duchess will be a stranger to them. She will in future take her holidays (no more than ten days twice a year, to be accompanied by the children) at bracing English resorts. The Isle of Wight, for example, offers some lovely long walks, and little danger of bumping into regrettable figures from one's past.

She will be decently clad, as befits a female royal, in an outfit incorporating the following: headscarf, stout handbag, sensible shoes, ruffle-neck blouse, puffed jacket, skirt (A-line, mid-calf, navy or dark green).

She can forget all notions of Rehabilitation Through Good Works — or photo-opportunities, as they are more commonly known. Never again will she be pictured handing out teddy bears to underprivileged Slaves. It is probably unnecessary to specify the other circumstances in which she will not be photographed. Her friends will be vetted by Sir Robert Fellowes, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Nicholas Soames. If she does all this, beginning tomorrow, her reward may, perhaps, be some far-flung corner of the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore (just next to the compost heap and the cold-water tap). That Is Forever Fergie.



Comeback bid: but it would take a strict code of conduct to keep the Duchess of York from embarrassing the Royal Family



Kate Sekulese training at Gleason's gym in Brooklyn. "I love pushing myself to the limits"

'I like hitting women'

Kate Sekulese strolls into a bar in Soho, tall, dark and muscularly attractive. With her long, feathery hair and hard clothes, she is the model of a certain kind of urban intellectual: cool, street smart, perhaps a little jaded. Born and brought up in London, she has spent the past five years in New York. Her conversation responds to the rhythm of the American vernacular. She has published fiction. She writes for *The New Yorker* and *Harpers Bazaar* and is working on a book of reportage. She could be Zoe Heller, Julie Burchill or any other worldly metropolitan sophisticate.

Except that she isn't. For at 36, when many women are thinking about the family they might never have, Sekulese is pursuing a career as a professional boxer. She trains daily at Gleason's in Brooklyn, the oldest and arguably most famous boxing gym in the world. Founded in 1937, it has been used by 113 world champions, including Muhammad Ali and Jake La Motta.

Gleason's is a tough, punishing place to train. Sekulese relishes the discipline, the camaraderie and challenge, the relentless toil. "I love pushing myself to the limits, seeing what my body can do, what I can achieve."

Does she like hitting women? "Yes," she says, without pausing. "Any woman boxer who says otherwise is a liar. I don't wish to harm, but there's great liberation in the removal of this taboo."

Professional boxing may be becoming increasingly corrupt and debased, controlled by gangsters and chancers, but it is hard to fault the dignity and courage of many fighters. At its best, and this is what appeals to Sekulese, boxing has a dark purity. It is about living on the edge.

"The charge I get from confronting what I most fear is hard to explain," she says.

Yet, until a few years ago, women's boxing was little more than a freak show, a spectacle as grotesque as mud wrestling, adhering to the rules of the underground. "Foxy boxing", featuring topless women sparring in sleazy inner-city pubs, had a certain prurient popularity, but was a travesty of the real thing.

The dispute that preceded the Amateur Boxing Association's cancellation of the first legal competitive bout between two teenage girls — Emma Brammer and Andrea Prime — showed the strength of opposition to women fighters here. Women are prevented from boxing professionally by the British Boxing Board of Control, something Jane Couch, the women's world welterweight champion, plans to challenge by taking the board to an industrial tribunal, alleging restraint of trade and sexual discrimination.

Sekulese is unhappy about hostility to her sport. In the US, she says, where women have been boxing in amateur competitions since 1994, women's boxing is already established. A leading promotion is

Boxer Kate Sekulese believes the sport has a purity and a purpose. Interview by Jason Cowley

not complete without a women's bout. Christy Martin, probably the most famous woman boxer, fought on the undercard of the Frank Bruno-Mike Tyson heavyweight contest in March last year.

Sekulese accepts the danger of boxing, but disputes whether women are at greater risk, because of the vulnerability of their breasts, than men. "Just as men have to wear boxes to protect their genitals, so we wear padded breast guards. These cyber-bras are effective, but bloody uncomfortable."

A keen softball player and fitness obsessive, she became interested in boxing after being introduced to the moves of the sport at aerobics classes: skipping, shadow boxing, light sparring. One afternoon, a friend took her to Gleason's and she was thrilled by what she found: four rings held together with gaffer tape, the stench of sweat and mildew in the air, the thwack of gloves on punchbags, the panting and heaving of fighters. "It was a real fight gym. I was hooked."

Soon she was training regularly at Gleason's, honing her technique, developing her strength. Her then boyfriend was astounded by the transformation in her body. "He put me on a pedestal, developing this erotic obsession with my strength," she says. "He was used to being the strong one and didn't really understand what I was doing, or why. He found my increasing physical strength disturbing and exciting. In the end, I think it bothered him that he wasn't in control."

He was surely bothered, too, when Kate threw a fierce punch at him, deliberately landing it less than an inch from his face. "I could tell by his expression that my potential power blew him away," she says.

Sekulese grew up in Holland Park, West London, the daughter, she says, of "typically sophisticated middle-class metropolitan parents". Her father, an Austrian Jewish émigré, was a journalist. He died just before Kate went to Manchester University to read English and drama. There she sang in a punk band, never graduating. "I did the rock'n'roll thing and perhaps hoped to make it as a singer."

She eventually completed her degree as a mature student at the then Middlesex Polytechnic, and began working as a freelance journalist. She moved to New York after becoming weary of the "competitiveness, paranoia and relentless ambition" of the "London media scene".

Her German mother, Marianne, disapproves of boxing. "I was horrified when Kate told me she was going to box," she says, with heavily accented English. "I never thought she would actually fight professionally. I hate boxing; I don't consider something that involves knocking someone else unconscious to be a sport."



Cool: Kate Sekulese

She describes her daughter as a maverick, by way of explanation for her unconventional behaviour. "Kate has always been different, doing things that others wouldn't dare. When I told her what I thought of boxing, she said 'Yes, but you used to fence'. Which is true, but fencing, full of skill and elegance, is a sport in the way that boxing isn't. One hears of too many boxers dying. Kate is a writer; her brain is her bread and butter. I'm afraid that she might not

her next bout will be against a fellow welterweight.

How serious is Kate Sekulese about boxing? As with many women fighters, she came late to her sport. At 36, she senses that her career might already be entering its twilight, especially if young women from the ghettos follow the lead of many deprived men and use boxing as an escape out of poverty.

Bruce Silverglade, who owns Gleason's, has seen her fight. "Kate is a wonderfully balanced, dedicated fighter and a fine athlete. But she has entered the sport at a time when there is not much money about. In a couple of years, things might be different."

By then it will probably be too late for Sekulese. But at least she will have experienced what Thomas Hauser, in *The Black Light*, his book about the New York fight scene, calls "a strange world that few outsiders see and even fewer understand, a dark world that takes what's most savage in man and pushes it to centre stage, against a backdrop of exploitation and pain."

No one can take that away from her.

For savings on hundreds of other destinations and to open an account call us now! Comparisons with B.T.'s standard weekly rates. Prices are correct as of 01.10.97 & are in pence per minute. Please have your credit card ready when you call.

SWIFTCALL
0800 769 0022



Surprisingly cheap international phone calls

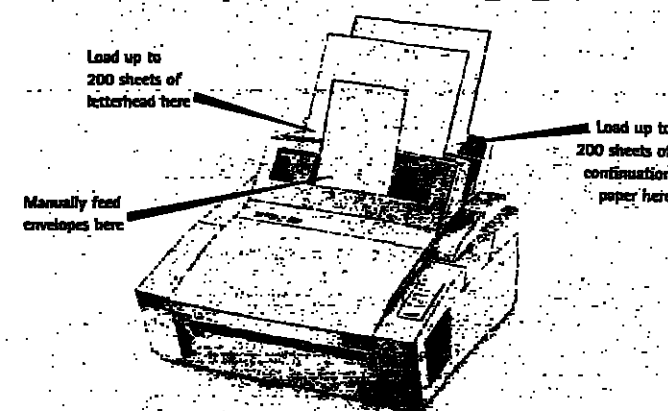
Swiftcall Versus B.T.		SAVINGS	Swiftcall Versus B.T.		SAVINGS
Australia	25p / 49p	49%	Malaysia	40p / 77p	48%
Canada	14p / 24p	42%	Nigeria	80p / £1.05	24%
France	14p / 28p	50%	Pakistan	80p / £1.33	40%
India	60p / £1.20	50%	South Africa	40p / 73p	49%
Ireland	14p / 23p	39%	Taiwan	46p / £1.08	57%
Japan	24p / 77p	69%	USA	14p / 24p	42%

Easy to use with no hidden charges

all prices include VAT + 24hr rates + use any touch tone telephone
Telutext page 384 + visit our website: www.swiftcall.com

NEW SWIFTCALL CALLING CARDS! FOR INCREDIBLE SAVINGS OF UP TO 70% ON B.T.'S PAYPHONE RATES. CONTACT YOUR LOCAL NEWS AGENT. DESTINATION NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE. FOR DETAILS FREEDOME 0800 769 0022.

Save time and money around the office.



The Brother HL-1060 — The only 10ppm laser printer on the market with dual paper trays as standard.

You're busy — the last thing you need is to be constantly up and down feeding different types of stationery into your printer. You don't have to — not with the Brother HL-1060 printer.

Its two standard paper trays let you pre-load any combination of conventional office stationery, and its manual feed allows you to handle more

complex jobs — so you can get on with your work while the HL-1060 gets on with the printing.

Combine this with its 10 page per minute print speed and a surprisingly low price (a second paper tray is usually an expensive option), and you'll not only save a great deal of time but also a considerable amount of money.

*Correct as of 01.10.97 prices.

See the HL-1060 at your local PC World or Tempe store. Alternatively call the number below for your nearest Brother stockist.

0345 535 100
CALL THIS NUMBER QUOTING REF: TM063

brother
More than just features

And for this farce, many thanks

Anatole Kaletsky looks on the bright side of a financial debacle

What delicious irony. The Government, which made an art of manipulating the media and turned the ruthless control of all political "messages" into a sort of religion, has inflicted upon itself the worst and most unnecessary media fiasco since Margaret Thatcher's bizarre Westland crisis.

It seems that Peter Mandelson, the Minister without Portfolio, was so busy threatening junior backbenchers who dared to express a view about the Millennium Dome or the Prime Minister's holiday arrangements, that he completely forgot about the minor matter of European monetary union.

Was this oversight just a matter of incompetence? Or was it perhaps attributable to Mr Mandelson's genuine pro-European convictions — convictions which may have been so strong that the Government was unable to devise a coherent message in which it believed. Either way, the upshot has been a highly entertaining farce for journalists and other political junkies. For the City, the Government and, perhaps, the country this debacle has been rather more serious than a farce.

The most obvious costs have been borne by the business men and dealers who sold sterling in the past three weeks in response to the series of *Financial Times* stories which claimed that the Government was "moving towards" an early decision to join EMU. Their gullibility has been punished by multimillion-pound losses.

Another casualty will be the Treasury's credibility in financial markets and therefore its ability to influence the level of the pound. Rightly or wrongly, many investors believe that the now-repudiated *Financial Times* story was leaked in order to manipulate the pound downwards. In future, investors will be more cautious about falling for "scoops" of this kind. More seriously, the Government has now been forced to give up its most powerful reserve weapon against currency speculators. This was the possibility, however remote, that Britain might unexpectedly join EMU or the ERM at an exchange rate which exposed speculators to sudden losses.

Now that Gordon Brown has ruled out EMU membership for the rest of the Parliament, this ultimate deterrent is no longer available. International investors can buy (or sell) sterling without fear of political ambush. In the short term, at least, the Treasury's unilateral disarmament could cause a further unwelcome hardening of the pound, as suggested in the article on this page by John Monks.

The Government's political losses are equally clear. It was always Tony Blair's intention to keep Britain out of EMU until 2002. But like any pragmatic politician, he would have preferred to keep his options open. The people responsible for planning and then promoting the *F7* story made this impossible. Their intention was to soften up the media, the public and the financial markets for a dramatic pro-EMU announce-

ment. They may even have been trying to build up enough political momentum to bounce the Prime Minister into a decision he would otherwise reject. Now this bungled manipulation has achieved exactly the opposite result. Instead of trapping Mr Blair into an endorsement of EMU, the over-zealous Europhiles have forced him to stake out a policy position more sceptical than John Major was ever prepared to occupy.

This brings us to the really important issue. What costs will the debacle inflict on the nation? To judge by the barrage of criticisms from Euro-skeptics in the business community, Mr Blair's decision could consign Britain to Third World status. In reality, however, the news is not at all bad. Britain might have been marginally better off if the Treasury had retained the tactical threat of EMU membership as a trump card in its game of bluff with financial markets. Keeping options open might also have smoothed relations with Bonn, Paris and Brussels, where diplomats and officials are still in a state of shocked denial, blankly refusing to believe that Gordon Brown could really have said what he did over the weekend. But these tactical benefits of fudging the EMU issue would have been more than offset in the long term by the attendant political confusion, financial uncertainty and practical business risks.

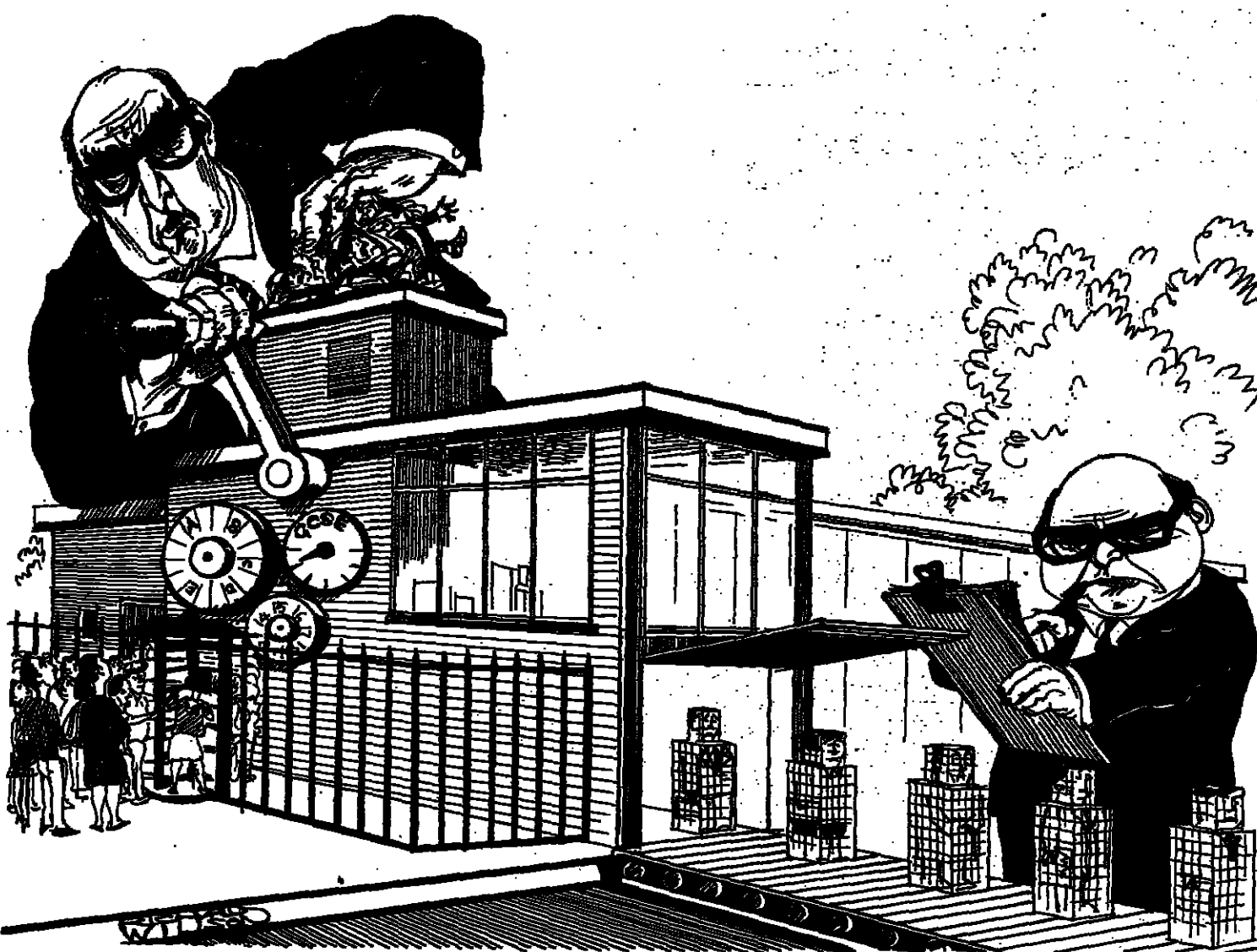
Britain will lose nothing of substance by being excluded from the initial deliberations on EMU, since all the important decisions have already been taken about the structure of the European central bank, the conduct of monetary policy and so on.

The Government, meanwhile, will be forced to set a clear agenda for its policy in Europe. The main objectives of Britain's European policy will now have to be the maintenance of open markets, the dismantling of trade barriers and the equal treatment for all EU countries, inside or outside the single currency block.

When faced with 11 EMU countries "informally" co-ordinating their economic policies and then voting a bloc, even the most starry-eyed federalists will realise that the only way to achieve British objectives will be to preserve the veto on all decisions relating to tax policy, social security and labour markets.

Such a tough British approach will not preclude membership of the single currency in the long run. A general election victory for Labour in the spring of 2001, followed by a summer referendum on EMU, could still pave the way for Britain to join in July 2002, when the euro is supposed to become Europe's sole legal tender. For the next five years, however, business will be able to work in a stable environment, financial markets will trade on economic fundamentals instead of rumours, and British citizens will know what their Government's policy is on Europe.

For that at least the bungling spin-doctors deserve a vote of thanks.



Beleaguered children

League tables should be simple measures of competence — so let us rescue pupils from educational mass production

The great thing about 1966 — as far as I can remember — is that if you were taking your O levels, nobody but your parents and teachers was the slightest bit interested.

Newspaper headlines did not shriek about them, politicians made no speeches about them. Exams held their terrors all right, but they belonged to your own right, under-age subculture: you did your papers, got your certificate and if all was well you promptly lost it. Well or ill, the assumption was that life went on.

By the time the scroll with the curly writing turned up you were either on your way to A levels, or at work. Your ordeal faded in the light of common day. You were not — as children are today — the uncomfortable focus of ceaseless, acrimonious national debate.

Thirty years on, the humble 15-plus exam gets more publicity than Edwina Currie and EMU rolled into one. On some mornings, scanning the newspapers, you would think GCSE had recruited Max Clifford: if it were a woman, it would be a mix in a gold minidress schmoozing with Fara Palmer-Tomkinson on the paparazzi party circuit. Drunk on the oxygen of publicity, it never passes a day without being invoked, attacked, defended, or involved in scandals. What should be a modest measure of basic competence, one of many indicators of how education works, has become a national fetish.

There are two explanations for this. One is the growth, under successive headless or incompetent administrations, of mass youth unemployment. Having a certificate takes on a whole new importance if it is the only recognition you are likely to get of your talent and willingness to work.

The other reason for the cult of certificate-worship is more recent: the decision to judge all schools by one standard only, the A-C grades they pile up at GCSE, and the A levels two years later. The accuracy and usefulness of this yardstick was illustrated nicely at the weekend by the story of the school in Southport which shows up in tables as having a substandard GCSE pass rate, even though it in fact scores above average — because the figures count only children taking the exam at 15, and a number at this school do them early because they are bright, or late because they have learning difficulties.

Together, league tables and fear of unemployment have given all exami-

nations a new, superstitious aura of high importance. Even after A level most universities are too busy or too idle to interview, and rely wholly on grades: more than ever before in the history of British education, what you score matters more than what you know or what you are.

Hence an epidemic of seediness. We have had more, and more aggressive, appeals against bad marking this year than ever before. Meanwhile this week a teachers' journal sends out a guide ranking the various examination boards according to the difficulty of getting high marks.

Other business practices encouraged by league-table fetishism are also rife. Competitive schools prevent children who are likely D grades or below from being entered for certain subjects, so that they do not mar the school figures. And don't write pompous letters saying this never happens: it does. Last time I mentioned it in print (apropos A levels and "colling" of the lower sixth) I was deluged with examples at all levels. Never mind that your child wants to give it a try and can face failure: the school, these days, can't.

Even primary education is being tainted by this culture. A teacher in Dulwich is claiming at an industrial tribunal that she was sacked because she reported a fellow teacher for opening a government reading test and coaching ten-year-olds for it. She may or may not be right, but certainly test hysteria has unbent plenty of people who should know better. In a shameful interlude of the late 1980s, the Education Department released to the press the titles of recommended reading books before letting schools have them. Platoon of pushy parents snapped up every copy immediately, so that small country

schools such as ours were left unable to get teaching copies: I was dispatched to London to scour the bookshops. None of this had anything to do with literacy or the job of enthusing small children about reading.

This culture means that teaching has less and less to do with appreciating individuality and fanning sparks. It is all very well for the Government to put out sappy recruiting posters about how "nobody ever forgets a good teacher", but out there in the real world (a Tory-built world which new Labour shows no sign of challenging) heads of school departments are described as "line managers" and teachers treated as mere self-stuckers "delivering the national curriculum".

Granted, education needed to be reformed in the mid-Seventies. Great numbers of children were being short-changed because the quality of schools was uneven. Not universally bad, please note: uneven. HM Inspectors had been pointing to the problem schools for a long time, but nobody in government ever listened to them (this, I admit, was the disadvantage of that golden age before exam results got politically glamorous). It should have been possible to target the bad schools and leave the good ones their freedom, their idiosyncratic cultures and slow-grown wisdom. But the shrill, inept, bickering way that reform was undertaken has led us to a gloomy pass. We are now stuck with a boring, neurotic, mechanistic approach to education: and the awful thing is that as usual, those with least money bear the brunt of it.

Look at what happened last week. Ampleforth College, the Roman Catholic independent boarding school, airily announced that it will no longer bother with GCSE English literature because pupils and teachers alike are bored with the way that *Great Expectations*, *Animal Farm* and *Macbeth* grind round year after

year with few other texts of any substance. So they have started their own Eng Lit Certificate, bringing in Chaucer, Swift and Fielding, Blake and Coleridge and Dylan Thomas. An outside examiner comments that the first year of this showed work of A-level standard. Miffed, the exam boards defend their corner; other top schools roll up their eyes piously and claim that their pupils already read far more widely than the set books, so there is no need to loosen their feverish grip on the security blanket of GCSE.

But there is something appealingly cheeky about what Ampleforth has done. In a small, symbolic way it has put care for culture above nervous conformity. It has indicated to its pupils that wide understanding is more important than narrow marking, and borne witness — in its arrogantly maverick upper-caste RC way — to a neglected truth. It reminds us that government tests are nothing but a baseline, a useful but rough indicator. Education is more. Employers want more. Adult life requires more.

That is not an elitist public school truth: it is a universal one. No school, even the most beleaguered comprehensive, should be reduced to teaching only with an eye on exam results. Every pupil in the country deserves teachers who offer glimpses of a wider, richer view — of history, science, English, whatever. Every child needs to be taught to explore and enjoy as well as prepare and revise. In really good schools, exams are almost an interruption of the real business of learning.

But it is being made harder and harder for State schools, that is to say for the overwhelming majority, to put learning before grades and let young intellects breathe. An independent headmistress I know is fond of decreeing that no girl should sit more than eight GCSEs, but must take two or three other subjects during those years just for pleasure. Most heads prefer to herd their brightest pupils through ten or even 12 subjects, just for the glory.

Ampleforth may haughtily discard the standard measure of Eng Lit approved by UK plc and set its pupils free in the wider garden of literature. Bog Lane Comprehensive has no such option, even though its pupils and its best teachers may have precisely the same yearnings. Is this fair?

● *SINCE the Diary rather blew the career of David Clark, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, into the afterlife by detailing his foreign jaunts, he has launched an inquiry to find the mole. He has also been keeping an unusually low profile. He was to appear on On the Record this weekend, but pulled out suddenly, leaving the BBC with the delightful but small presence of the junior minister, Peter Kilfoyle. Clark's excuse? A perforated eardrum. And that was before John Humphrys had floated a few questions past him.*

Chaplin's distinctive baller-mime style. That was very gypsiesh. What about contemporary Romanies? Well, Bob Hoskins, David Essex and Eric Cantona are all known to have Gypsy blood. Cantona was once seen doing a flamenco with the Gypsy Kings, but Ms Sebestyen insists her evidence is stronger. "It is hard to prove. People rarely say they are from Romanies stock," Victoria Glendinning, Sackville-West's biographer, is sceptical. "She used to play with the language as a game, but there is no hint of Gypsy blood. She was an aristocrat, although she did have a Spanish grandmother." Well, there you go.

JASPER GERARD

You still have time, Mr Brown

John Monks urges a firm commitment to join EMU

What the country needed was a great debate about EMU. What it has got is a chaotic post-mortem into which government sources said what, when and to whom. The results have been predictable, with instability in the markets, upward pressure on the pound and jobs at risk.

Whether or not we join the European Monetary System, and when we do so, is clearly the most difficult decision this Government faces. Of course, putting off tough decisions is always attractive. This one will doubtless win praise from the Eurosceptic press. But this is one issue that is too important and too historic for even the most media-conscious Government to take on the basis of tomorrow's headlines.

The latest steer is that the Government will rule out membership of EMU until after the next election. This would be a grave error. It would hit jobs and investment in the short term. It risks ending the new Government's bid to play a leadership role in Europe. In the longer term it would repeat the dismal pattern of our involvement in Europe.

Ruling out EMU membership until after the election will directly hit jobs. First, Britain's uncertain position will deter investment in the British economy. New inward investors will be put off and existing players likely to look more favourably on other countries for expansion. Toyota made this point clear last week when it decided to locate its new plant in France.

Secondly, we are likely to repeat the experience of the summer, when the pound hit stratospheric levels well in excess of the unsustainable rate at which we joined the exchange-rate mechanism. Being a refuge for the world's hot money would be no compensation for an exchange rate that systematically undermines every manufacturing and exporting company across the country.

There are real practical obstacles to very early entry, not least because much of Britain is not ready to join on day one owing to the wait-and-see policy. This is well understood both in business and across Europe.

But it is also the case that erecting false barriers to entry helps no one. It is simply not the case that tax bills would have to go up by £20 billion if Britain were to join. This is a figure that seems as plucked from the air as figures made up to scare people about joining the social chapter or agreeing a sensible minimum wage.

Nor is it the case that the UK's economic cycle will ever be exactly in step with that of our European partners. Demanding that fortuitous set of circumstances is not far from saying never to EMU membership. In any case, the comparisons made between our economies are often ill-informed. For example, we are often told that our interest rates are out of kilter. Yes, there is a differential, but like is rarely compared with like. In Britain, our short-term interest rates determine long-term commitment such as mortgages, and business borrowing. In Germany long-term rates are precisely that and are closer to our rates than the short-term figures normally compared. Long-term interest rates for France, Germany and the UK are all within the 6 to 7 per cent range.

There are, however, two conditions that any Government would surely want before taking the decision to join. First, they would want a weak Opposition, a big majority in Parliament and big approval ratings in the polls. Secondly, they would want a strong economy, able to respond to the more favourable circumstances that the clear stand would bring. If we add the extra bonus of having deliberately warned voters of the need for tough decisions, it seems to me that this Government could not ask to be in a better position.

Nor should the Government be frightened of public opinion. The polls may show opposition to emotive statements such as "giving up the pound", but as Bob Tynell, of the Henley Centre, is reported to have told William Hague's Shadow Cabinet, this is a very shallow view. Concentrated campaigning by the Government, business and unions for a "yes" vote in a referendum would almost certainly turn this round.

Ruling out early membership would cause real difficulties for the Conservative Party. Labour's ambition to win the next election is wholly admirable, but it is hardly taking your eye off the electoral ball to realise that the Tories have enough difficulties of their own. Indeed, making the Government's position pretty close to the feeble "not in the foreseeable future" line taken by Mr Hague and Mr Lilley will allow them to brush their vicious divisions under a Government-provided carpet.

I am a friend of this Government. I desperately want it to succeed. My loyalty will be there when the going gets tough. But sometimes friends have to give candid advice.

The Chancellor is, we learn, to make a statement to Parliament when it returns. He still has time to reaffirm the Government's commitment to a single currency and setting out the process, and timetable by which Britain can join.

The author is General Secretary of the TUC.

Wedding blues

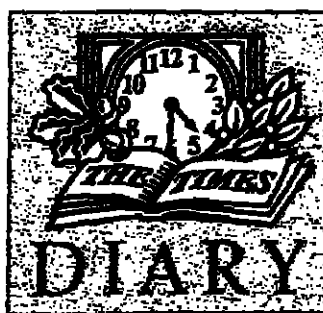
WHILE the cheap prints were much exercised by Baroness Thatcher's anger with William Hague for sharing rooms with his fiancée at the Blackpool conference, the former Prime Minister was actually cross with the new Tory leader for an altogether more serious crime: political naivety. Lady Thatcher, I understand, believes that Hague missed a trick by failing to marry Fion Jenkins on the eve of the conference. This has little to do with family values and much to do with positive publicity.

She recently confided in an old friend — a senior Tory — that Hague could have bolstered the party's flagging morale (and, perhaps, its morality) by bringing the wedding forward.

"It would have sent the right message to the party and to the country at the right time," she is reputed to have said. "Timing is everything in politics and William knows my feelings about family values." Yes, indeed. Perhaps those erstwhile Thatcherites who have suddenly found modern morality to be so seductive, should watch out.

Dig this

CAN you imagine a more demanding job? Head gardener to the



Prince of Wales. Thumbing through *Horticulture Week*, I have stumbled across a notice from Highgrove, requesting a tiler with "substantial experience in maintaining and developing the garden and parkland to the highest standard, using organic methods". Candidates are expected to have "a flexible and positive approach to the complexities of a developing garden". (Er, he is going to have to work damned hard.)

It is rare for such jobs to be advertised, but Prince Charles is

thought to get irritated with Highgrove helpers who do not share his herbaceous ambitions. "He always wants to be the head gardener himself," as one wiling poppy puts it. So who is the current occupant of the post? "There isn't one, as such," says St James's Palace. "Everyone mucks in together."

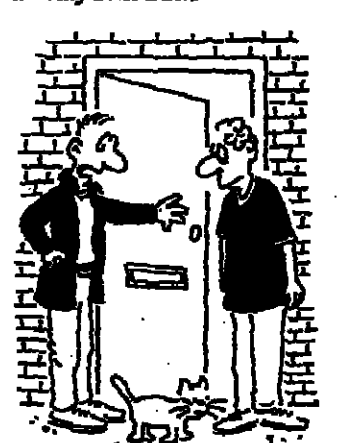
Not quite. "David Magson has been in control of the gardens for eight years," says Rosemary Verey, one of the Prince's horticultural consultants. "He is a talented, dedicated and able gardener, who worked extremely well. I have not been told why someone else is being brought in." Nothing, I am sure, to do with having such a challenging boss.

Home run

TWENTY years after his father packed the soup tureens and sold the family stately to a receiving company, Viscount Wimbome, an occasional record-producer, has bought it back again.

Ashby St Ledgers, a 17th-century pile in the rather less smart part of Dorset, was home to five generations of Wimbomes before the last viscount sold up to drift between Paris and New York. When he died — leaving his son to get by on £30 million — young Wimbome, 30, decided to move back.

"He lived there as a child and thought it was time to come home," says an associate. "He's very happy there but it's rather uncomfortable — there are no beds and the walls aren't very stable." When he has ordered in a few four-posters, Wimbome will have ample space to entertain. The house comes complete with three reception rooms, 30 bedrooms, a gatehouse and 32 acres of garden designed by Lutyens. Here is material for a sequel to *A Dance to the Music of Time* — subtitled *The Aristocracy Bites Back*.



Romani roles

WHAT links Vita Sackville-West and Eric Cantona? Both, apparently, are Gypsies. As bands of nomadic types flood into an unwelcoming Dover, the Romani Institute is producing a calendar of role models. Yul Brynner, Charlie Chaplin, Ava Gardner and, improbably, Sackville-West, are claimed as "known Gypsies", while those with "rumoured Romani connections" include Picasso, Cervantes and Presley.

This is our way of reminding people that Gypsies have been a key part of European culture for more than a thousand years," says Amanda Sebestyen, a big gold bangle in the movement. "Look at



THE ASYLUM TRAP

How EU law has made nonsense of Britain's frontier controls

Great though the strain their arrival has put on Dover's limited emergency accommodation and schools, the sudden influx of Romanians from the Czech Republic and Slovakia is only a small part of a larger problem. What is really at issue here is not the plight of these particular asylum-seekers, who come from countries where Gypsies certainly suffer from discrimination but which are not otherwise tyrannies. It is the appalling mess which the European Union has made of asylum policy.

The EU's Dublin Convention, which was negotiated in 1990 and entered into force on September 1, was intended to bring order to the chaos of EU immigration and asylum procedures. It has done the opposite.

Under the old system, the European Union state in which applicants for asylum first arrived were the countries of "first asylum" within the meaning of the UN refugee convention; and the country in which immigrants first resided, legally or illegally, was liable to accept them back if they then applied for asylum in another EU state. That also applied to visa-free entry, which Britain and other EU countries now grant to Central Europeans. This was the basis on which the 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act was drawn up, even after the previous Government had signed a convention that it clearly should have blocked.

Now, however, the first "safe country" is deemed to be not the first EU country they reach, but the EU country in which they first apply for asylum. A central roster now records asylum applications, to prevent asylum-seekers moving to another EU country if their first applications are refused. But even then, if Britain receives a "duplicate" asylum application, all it can do is request the EU country where asylum was first sought to take them back. What happens if that country refuses is unclear.

The effect of this cunningly drafted convention is to enable states, such as Germany and Austria, whose frontiers march with Eastern and Central Europe, to let migrants as well as refugees through the net without fear of being held liable. This system is wide open to abuse. It makes it easy for would-be refugees to target the

country most likely to take them in, or whose processing procedures are so slow that they can at least reckon on a prolonged stay.

The EU's "external" frontiers are its main line of defence, because most frontier controls in the EU have been abolished under the Schengen treaty, to which Britain is not a party. Even where there are checks, immigration officers are evidently "waving through" cars and coachloads from Central Europe en route to Britain, knowing that they cannot be held liable to take them back. So, clearly and more seriously, do immigration officers in Austria and Germany, where the Czechs and Slovaks entered the EU.

Britain's own frontier controls still work reasonably well at airports. Asylum-seekers and would-be immigrants know that if they arrive by air, they risk being put straight back on a flight out, particularly if they come from countries on Britain's "white list", where human rights are deemed to be adequately respected. If their papers are not in order, airlines may be subject to fines and required to pay for their repatriation.

More and more asylum-seekers — one out of nine — are therefore crossing Europe to arrive by sea. Ferry operators, unlike airlines, are not held legally liable for having accepted them as passengers. And if they arrive from another European Union country, Britain cannot put them on a return boat because the continental Channel port authorities, France and Belgium, have no obligation to accept them.

This means that if they apply for asylum at British seaports, they are almost bound to be admitted while their cases are processed. And it is widely known among would-be immigrants, as well as genuine refugees, that with a backlog of 53,000 applicants waiting for their cases to be heard here, they will stay for months if not years.

The only option for the Government is to return unsuccessful applicants to their own countries — as it should in the case of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but cannot always safely do. Britain has no hope of renegotiating a convention tailor-made for Germany and Austria. It can and must cut the delays in handling asylum cases that make Britain a destination of choice.

QUADRANGLES AND QUOTAS

Oxbridge should be examined on applications not admissions

It is not a quota nor a target but it might be an ambition or an aspiration. With the aid of this rigorous analysis, Cambridge University has signalled its intention of increasing by a third the number of students it accepts from the state sector. The suggestion that this might be linked to the impending decision on the future of the college fee has been indignantly disavowed by the dons concerned. Nonetheless, the smell of politics is clear. The Cambridge initiative would probably be welcomed by David Blunkett, who seems inclined to retain present funding arrangements in return for a dramatic programme to increase state-school admissions. It would not, however, satisfy Baroness Blackstone, the Minister for Higher Education, who seems determined to do to Oxbridge what Henry VIII did to the monasteries — only more thoroughly.

Cambridge should be cautious about any numerical promises. Its adopted figure of 65 per cent for state school admissions reflects the sector's proportion of all students achieving three A grades at A levels. These numbers do not, as it happens, identify those whose performance at A level exceeds this impressive standard. Moreover, among the "state" students are counted those from grammar schools, not a category that the Government believes is currently under-represented at Oxford or Cambridge. The statistics also treat as "independent" those who studied within the state sector until the age of 16 but then successfully sought a sixth-form scholarship at a fee-paying establishment. These numbers should not be by themselves shape an admissions strategy.

The real issue is not admissions but applications. If able students from state schools do not fill in the relevant forms then neither university can accept them. Efforts have

been made by both Oxford and Cambridge in recent years, but much more should be done to persuade talented state school students to come forward. That in turn would require close co-operation between the colleges and the university. The best practice of some colleges should be emulated by others. If that happened, merit alone would swiftly force up the proportion of state school entrants. Without such a shift, a quasi-quota system will devalue excellence.

The admissions issue reflects the wider question confronting the ancient universities. The extreme decentralisation that has historically characterised Oxford and Cambridge does not fit well with a world of mass higher education. The existing "decision-making process" based on a complex maze of committees requires drastic reform so that it is capable of making decisions. The drive for openness should be concerned with rather more than the courting of comprehensives. Cambridge is moving in this direction. The North Commission will soon offer Oxford its opportunity. Oxbridge needs change as much as it needs college fee income.

Other attitudes also need alteration. Oxford and Cambridge have found their current campaigns frustrated in certain state schools. The old slogans of elitism and exclusion are still a significant impediment. This hostility remains the biggest barrier to broader access. Oxbridge cannot be expected to overcome it alone. It does not help matters that the Minister for Higher Education often appears to sympathise with the cynics and sceptics. The Government is entitled to ask Oxford and Cambridge to modernise if they want to maintain exceptional funding. The Prime Minister might contemplate whether his present team at the Department for Education helps or hinders that process.

WELCOME WANDER WARBLERS

Now watch the birdie on the suburban clothesline

The twitchers were twitching from head to foot on Sunday as they flocked down to Dorset. A Siberian Rubythroat had been reported near the Smugglers Inn, three miles outside Weymouth. This little bird, like a jewelled robin, was something rarer to them than the most precious contraband ever handled in the inn. Only one member of this Asiatic species had been recorded in Britain, and that was on Fair Isle 25 years ago. This was the first chance for most of the twitchers to get a UK "tick" of it.

Latecomers arriving at dawn yesterday were not so lucky. The bird had flown — as they do. It had not proved very "twitchable", to use the current birdwatching jargon. That is to say, it had not hopped about co-operatively, so that everybody who wanted could get a good sighting of it.

Never fear. There are other rare or uncommon birds turning up in Britain this month, most of them, like the Rubythroat, from Siberia or from Eastern Europe. Many of them are small warblers, such as the tiny yellow-browed warbler, which looks like a willow warbler with golden eyebrows. In the placid weather of the past few weeks they

have drifted westwards, when they thought they were migrating to their winter quarters in the Middle East or southern Asia.

Most of them have been seen in nature reserves, or on headlands and islands where birdwatchers regularly gather. They are seen especially often in nature reserve car parks, by ornithologists eating their sandwiches. In this, they illustrate the unromantic truth that ornithological records indicate the behaviour of birdwatchers rather than birds. One American researcher was amazed to discover that most spring migrants arrived in the United States on a Saturday or Sunday. Another, more jaundiced, defined a rare bird as any type that could not be seen from a freeway.

Many supposedly rare birds are simply unreported birds. For every uncommon bird that is spotted in a pub carpark full of twitchers, there must have been many more brought in on the favourable winds. So let the part-time birdwatcher look out. He or she may not need to thumb a lift on a helicopter to the Scillies to see a rose-coloured starling. There may be one sitting in the garden on the clothesline.

Ins and outs of EMU promises

From Mr Andrew Cruickshank

Sir, I fear your leader today ("Ins and outs") gives Messrs Blair and Brown too much credit for their current stance on EMU. No amount of "spin" can disguise the real reason for their Damascene conversion — or, in Mr Blair's case, reconversion.

In its "say anything to get elected" campaign the Labour Party promised a referendum if the Cabinet and Parliament voted for the abolition of sterling. This promise, of course, only holds good until the next general election. In reality, Tony Blair is no more prepared to let the British people decide this issue than was John Major to obtain their consent to the transfer of their sovereignty implicit in his beloved Maastricht treaty.

This is the only reason why entry into EMU is ruled out for the duration of this Parliament. The Labour Party's manifesto for the next election, I predict, will include a commitment to sign up for EMU without the promise of a referendum. Even if it retains only a fraction of its current landslide majority, the pound sterling, representing Britain's economic and ultimately political sovereignty, will be history.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW CRUICKSHANK,
The Doone,
Ryfield Road, Cobham, Surrey,
October 20.

From Mr Walter Grey

Sir, Gordon Brown's "expected" decision to rule out British participation in the single currency "for the lifetime of this Parliament" (report, October 18) would be regrettable, as was your predictably rapturous welcome of it in advance (leading article, same day). What, save for little Englanders, is there in it?

Late entry into the ERM (exchange-rate mechanism), EMU's stalwart forerunner, earned us the inflationary Lawson boom and its recessionary aftermath, both of which earlier entry, as wished by the then Chancellor and others, could have pre-empted. Deliberate aloofness following the tragedy of Black Wednesday then lost London (and won Frankfurt) the privilege and perks of hosting the future European central bank.

Needlessly foreclosing, if again only for a limited period, the EMU option now, even if it didn't actually harm us (eg, by nobbling our preparedness for the indefinitely delayed plunge), could only further benefit others at our expense.

Recognition of the formidable difficulties of the EMU project should not, once more, be made to tie our hands and feet while others, who would be quite content to see us join in the first wave, gain another head start.

Yours faithfully,
WALTER GREY,
12 Arden Road, Finchley, N3,
October 19.

From Mr Roger Everest

Sir, John Redwood's argument against joining the single currency ("No such thing as free euro", October 16) is that it would leave us subject to "wild swings on the exchanges into dollars and yen". Yet his policy would give an isolated Britain the added problem of swings of exchange into the currency of our principal market, allowing Germany an undesirable advantage over us.

The enormous cost of joining the single currency — conversion of cash machines and measures to control increased money in circulation — is worth it if we stay abreast or ahead of our competitors on the Continent.

Mr Redwood is right to condemn the Government's failure to make clear its intentions for this Parliament. I would like the electors of Beckenham (Mr Piers Merchant's seat) and Winchester (Mr Mark Oaten's) to send a clear message to the Cabinet and the country to get on with entry to the euro immediately.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER EVEREST,
Twifords, Talygarn,
Pontyclun, Mid Glamorgan.

From Mr Ronald Forrest

Sir, The claim in your October 18 leader that Tony Blair and Gordon Brown have shown maturity and flexibility in their assumed decision not to join EMU in the lifetime of the present Parliament is highly questionable. Might they not have been motivated by their desire to win a second term?

Their focus groups must surely have been telling them that the likelihood of winning a referendum on the single currency was remote, and a defeat would have boded ill for their chances of remaining in power after 2002.

Yours faithfully,
RONALD FORREST,
Delfryn, Castle Morris,
Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire.

Sauce for the gander

From Mr Peter Catto

Sir, At the flick of a switch by Gordon Brown, Stock Exchange transactions are now instantaneous (report, October 20). Do you think he could flick another switch so that cheques could be cleared instantaneously?

Yours faithfully,
P. M. CATTO,
14 Hyde Park Gardens, W2,
October 20.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Price of Oxbridge special treatment

From the Vice-Chancellor of the University of East London

Sir, The campaign by the Vice-Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge, and their supporters, to prevent the abolition of college fees (an additional £2,000 per Oxbridge student compared with students at other universities) is understandable (report, October 8; leading article October 9; letters, October 13). Individuals and organisations, having grown accustomed to a privileged position, never believe they can possibly survive without it.

This additional funding should, however, be tested against two criteria. The first is value for money, and since we are talking about taxpayers' money, value for public money. It totals up to about £25 million and largely goes to support the college system, which is characterised by one-to-one tutorials. Excellence in teaching and research, however, achieved equally by many departments around the country which operate on much larger tutorial/seminar sizes, shows that such a system is neither a necessary condition of excellence nor value for money.

Better value would be achieved either by distributing the £25 million among the other 103 universities or — my preference — using it as bursaries and scholarships to encourage students from lower-income groups to enter higher education. Larger numbers of students from lower-income backgrounds would clearly produce greater social benefits than the current regressive transfer which goes to students from largely higher-income groups who would in any case have gone to university.

The second test is one of equity. It is current policy for funding councils to move towards a system whereby the amount of grant going to each institution is equal for all students studying a particular subject. The additional funding per Oxbridge student being made in college fees is clearly in direct conflict with this equity criterion.

The case for a retention of Oxbridge college fees fails on both counts. Imagine a well established, high prestige school asking the Government for greater funding per pupil than its less well established and less prestigious neighbours in order that it might maintain its superior position.

Yours faithfully,
FRANK GOULD,
Vice-Chancellor,
University of East London,
Romford Road, E15,
October 15.

Design competitions

From Sir Andrew Derbyshire, FRIBA

Sir, Clients considering design competitions as a way of choosing architects for complex and prestigious buildings should think twice before embarking on such a risky course. The sad story of the Cardiff Opera House, eventually "dumped" in favour of a millennium centre ("Changing times in Cardiff", Weekend September 13), is a case in point.

A safer way to choose is through competitive interviews. These enable the client to take account of the architect's past achievements, the views of previous clients, visits to the office and relevant buildings and, most important of all, discussion about the architect's approach to the opportunity. This will reveal whether or not there is a meeting of minds and good chemistry between those involved.

It is my experience that buildings are as good as the human relationships which go to make them. If these are wrong there is little chance of a successful outcome.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW DERBYSHIRE,
4 Sunnyfield,
Hatfield, Hertfordshire,
October 10.

Brought to book

From Mr Joseph Connolly

Sir, Do I mind that Jason Cowley has portrayed me as a toadying and desperate novelist, approaching him for favours at a literary party ("The Booker Prize stole my summer", October 14)? Well — he's entitled to an opinion. Or that he has cited my first novel, *Poor Souls* (1995), as being in contention for a prize instead of *Stuff* (1997), my third? Not a bit — even Booker judges are capable of error.

As to his blindingly witty likening of my appearance to that of Karl Marx — I am simply bowled over in admiration. In all the 25 years I have worn longish hair and a full beard, no one before has ever ever passed such a remark.

But as to his assertion that at this literary party I was wearing an "Armani suit" — here I firmly draw the line. An off-the-peg Italian job? I think not. The suit in question — in common with all my suits — is bespoke Savile Row. I cannot remember what Mr Cowley was wearing, but I'm sure it was very nice.

Yours truly,
J. CONNOLLY,
c/o The Groucho Club,
45 Dean Street, W1,
October 15.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Strings attached to orchestral jobs

From Mr Alexander Cowdell

Sir, I found your report (October 13) on the funding of musical instruments for orchestral players and Lord Menzies' response (letter, October 17) most interesting.

As an orchestral musician, I would like to take the discussion a step further by pointing out that the instruments used by professional musicians in orchestras are classified by the Inland Revenue as "plant and machinery". Players in regional orchestras are considered to be "employees", but are nonetheless expected to provide their own instruments, like their self-employed colleagues in the London orchestras, and this considerable outlay must be undergone before they can even audition for a position.

Can you imagine a situation in, for example, the business sector, with employees expected to provide the equipment on which they work, and their job prospects dependent not merely on their skills and experience but on the quality of their computer? Yet this is the case with orchestras, where the quality of the sound is, at the end of the day, dependent not just on the talent of the musicians but on the quality of the instruments.

Many young musicians on leaving college, already in debt, will not be a position to afford the £6,000 to £8,000 mentioned by Lord Menzies for the purchase of a modern instrument. One is tempted to say that only in the arts could such ridiculous anomalies exist.

Yours sincerely,
A. COWDELL,
(Violinist,
English National Opera),
8 Blenheim Terrace,
Plumstead Common, SE18,
October 18.

From His Honour Owen Stable, QC

Sir, Ten years ago the Benslow Music Trust, a registered charity, was asked to take over the trusteeship of an existing musical instrument loan scheme. The scheme had been started as a result of a letter published in *The Times* on January 25, 1932, from two leading violin teachers, after their letter had been submitted and approved by 13 of the most eminent musicians of that day.

They asked owners of good instruments, which were not being used, to lend them to the trustees to lend out to promising young players unable to afford instruments commensurate with their ability.

Over the years the trust has been lent, or has had bequeathed or has bought, over 300 good-quality instruments, mostly stringed. Though its stock grows year by year, the demand from suitable borrowers far exceeds the trust's ability to meet demand.

Earlier this year the trust resolved to try to double its stock over the next five years, whether or not it receives help of lottery funds from the Arts Council.

Yours truly,
OWEN STABLE
(Chairman, development appeal),
Benslow Music Trust,
Little Benslow Hills,
Off Benslow Lane,
Hitchin, Hertfordshire,
October 17.

Sensitive souls

From Mr Eric McQuaid

Sir, I really must protest at the growing tendency of thin-skinned ministers, Mr Robin Cook (October 16) and Lord Irvine of Lairg (October 15) to name but two, to use your valuable but limited columns to defend their recent activities and comments.

This severely reduces the amount of space left for lesser mortals to air what are for most of us far more absorbing topics.

Let them rely on their talented spin-doctors to mislead us rather than wasting our time and your space.

Yours faithfully,
ERIC MCQUAID,
23a Langland Gardens, NW3,
October 17.

Sound investment?

From Mr J. Whittle

Sir, Breaking the sound barrier on talent, enterprise and courage — and was, in my opinion, a stupid waste of all of them.

Yours faithfully,
J. WHITTLE,
185 Garstang Road,
Fulwood, Preston, Lancashire,
October 17.

Golden egg

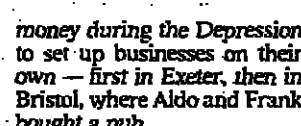
From Mr R. Collinge

Sir, Anniversary presents are notoriously difficult to choose, but surely Tai-Shan Schierenberg's gift to the Queen of his painting, *Bobby Charlton and his Mum* (front page, October 17), will be out of place among the masterpieces in Her Majesty's collection?

Yours sincerely,
R. COLLINGE,
Mon Abri, Townshend Road,
Worle, Weston-super-Mare,
North West Somerset,
October 17.

ALDO BERNI

To keep prices down, Berni and his brother replaced tablecloths with place mats — and saved £700,000 a year in laundry bills. They never signed written contracts with wholesalers, preferring to rely on



While his brothers Frank and Marco were interned during the war, Aldo was spared because he had a British passport. He was also exempted from serving in the Armed Forces, but had to

The quartet alternated between Mozart's G minor and his E flat (his only two piano quartets), and played nothing else on these occasions. Edge was also a capable singer, and

airship was behind a screen of
is, slackened speed and then
some seconds. The balloon
wards the ground. We fancied
ment to be a failure and the
peril. Happily, nothing of the
tion, then making 14 miles an
struggle with a breeze blowing at
miles an hour. This struggle not
ed its speed but necessitated
produced a displacement of the
the motor, thus affecting the
moment, some soldiers on the
to guide rope, thinking that the
be going to alight. M. Santos
the balloon seem to let go; he then
little ballast, and we were
little ballast, thus dispelling our
it then steered straight for St.
and without any fresh accident
ers bordering the Seine, then
inally disappeared in its shed...

airship was behind a screen of
is, slackened speed and then
some seconds. The balloon
wards the ground. We fancied
ment to be a failure and the
peril. Happily, nothing of the
tion, then making 14 miles an
struggle with a breeze blowing at
miles an hour. This struggle not
ed its speed but necessitated
produced a displacement of the
the motor, thus affecting the
moment, some soldiers on the
to guide rope, thinking that the
be going to alight. M. Santos
the balloon seem to let go; he then
little ballast, and we were
a little, thus dispelling our
it then steered straight for St.
and without any fresh accident
ers bordering the Seine, then
inally disappeared in its shed...

French politician attracted by the balcony ... W. Cloud. Sud. Dumont emerged slopes and mountains turned toward the horizon it took its line, and learning the space with

While the airship was behind a screen of houses the screw, the movement of which was audible to us, slackened speed and then stopped for some seconds. The balloon descended towards the ground. We fancied that it had reached the ground, but the navigator in peril. Happily, nothing of the kind. The balloon, then making 14 miles an hour, had to struggle with a breeze blowing at the rate of 13 miles an hour. This struggle not only slackened its speed but necessitated tacking which produced a displacement of the breeze inside the moon, thus affecting the screw. The screw, however, was not so perturbed. It seized the guide rope, thinking that the balloon must be going to alight. M. Santos Dumont, in alarm, told them to let go: he then threw out a little ballast, and we saw the balloon rise again, thus dispelling our uneasiness. It then steered straight for St. Cloud, crossed the river, and, after a few seconds, the trees bordering the Seine, then stopped and finally disappeared in its shed...

Your full g

***One FREE on-line entry via LineOne including all transfers. This is worth £9.**

Your full guide to ITF players and transfers

Strikers and goalkeepers may bring in high points tallies but much depends on shrewd choices in midfield

It is significant that Aston Villa, a club which can call upon proven international defenders like Gareth Southgate and Steve Staunton, and is able to field a forward line of Stan Collymore, Savo Milošević and Dwight Yorke, internationally all, feels the need to contemplate spending over £4 million on a midfield player with a poor fitness record and an even more unpredictable disciplinary one, yet who is expected to inspire an under-achieving Villa team to a top order, even if the name of the player in question is Paul Gascoigne.



Yet, if the midfield, the engine-room of a team, does not function, then, in all likelihood, neither will the other components. Get the midfield right, and everything flows from it. Gascoigne underlined his own value by scoring two and creating three of Rangers' seven against Dunfermline on Saturday.

Further south, much was made of the importance of the two forwards, John Harrison and Paul Kitson, to the survival of West Ham United in last season's FA Carling Premiership. This season, however, much of the team's improvement can be credited to Eyal Berkovic, the Israeli international midfielder player, formerly with Southampton.

like Peters, knows where the goal is. It is hardly surprising that West Ham have already received (and rejected) one offer in the region of £4.5 million for Berkovic. ITF entrants, however, can acquire Berkovic at a relatively knock-down £2.5 million; while they cannot benefit from the 27 points he has already accumulated, there seem certain to be plenty more points where they came from. With his every goal worth three points, a midfield player who can find the net is a valuable addition to any ITF team.

The story, perhaps apocryphal, goes that Graeme Souness, on holiday in Israel

some years ago, had been dragged from the beach to watch a promising youngster playing in a local match, and had liked and remembered what he saw; when the chance came for Souness to sign Berkovic (for it was he) for Southampton last October, he needed no second bidding.

Souness left The Dell over the summer and, to the dismay of Saints fans, Berkovic, who had been signed on a one-year lease was free to go too, and now finds himself in the East End, where he has been made welcome by supporters who have grown up on the midfield skills of Martin Peters, Trevor Brooking and Alan Devonshire. Berkovic himself combines the skills of all three: he can carry the ball like Devonshire, has the vision and delivery of a Brooking and,



Midfield masters: Gascoigne, above left, and Berkovic, left - good ITF acquisitions

THIS WEEK'S TRANSFERS

MOVED

52502 David Hirst Southampton £2.5m
transferred from Sheffield Wednesday

HOW TO MAKE A TRANSFER

YOU MAY transfer as and when you wish according to your team transfer allowance. If a player or manager moves teams during the season, it may affect the composition of your team. You may adjust your team by using the transfer system to avoid missing out on points.

EACH TEAM that was entered at the start of the season was allocated 80 transfers for the season and each team registering after that date has its number of transfers reduced by three per week up to December 13. All teams registered before noon that day will be allocated an extra 20 transfers. Teams registered after noon on December 13 will be allocated 20 transfers for the rest of the season.

THE LINE is open now and will remain open for the rest of the season. You may only make transfers by using a Touch-tone (DTMF) telephone (most push-button telephones with a * and a hash key are Touch-tone). You will need ten digits for your PIN which you will have to tap in (not speak). Follow the simple instructions and tap in the five-digit codes of the players that you are transferring.

YOU MAY make up to four transfers per call but may make as many calls as you wish to achieve the required amount of transfers.

TRANSFERS made before 12 noon on any day will become effective for matches starting after that time. Transfers made after 12 noon will become effective for matches starting after 12 noon the following day.

YOUR NEW player only starts to score points for you when his transfer is registered. The current score of the player transferred out remains part of your team score but he then ceases to score for you.

CALLS COST 50p per minute and calls from a telephone box cost approximately twice as much.

Transfer number: 0891 884 628.
Outside the UK: +44 990 200 538.

Code	Name	Team	Cost (£m)	Week	Total
10101	J. Leighton	Aberdeen	2.00	8	-1
10201	D. Seaman	Arsenal	5.00	7	42
10301	M. Bosnich	Aston Villa	3.00	-3	19
10401	D. Watson	Barnsley	1.00	0	-24
10501	T. Flowers	Blackburn	3.50	8	32
10601	K. Branagan	Bolton W	1.50	-2	14
10701	S. Kerr	Celtic	4.00	0	0
10801	E. De Gooij	Chelsea	3.00	8	18
10901	S. Ogrizovic	Coventry City	1.50	0	23
11001	C. Nash	Crystal Palace	0.25	0	0
11101	K. Miller	Crystal Palace	2.00	7	24
11201	M. Poom	Derby County	1.50	-1	26
11301	S. Dykstra	Dundee United	2.00	8	-8
11401	I. Westwater	Dunfermline	1.00	-13	-13
11501	N. Southall	Everton	2.00	8	7
11601	G. Rousseau	Hearts	1.50	0	25
11701	C. Reid	Hibernian	1.50	0	0
11801	D. Lovric	Kilmarnock	1.00	2	-6
11901	N. Martin	Leeds United	3.50	3	28
12001	K. Kellie	Leicester City	2.50	-0	38
12101	D. James	Liverpool	3.50	-3	14
12201	P. Schmeichel	Manchester United	5.00	0	58
12301	S. Howie	Motherwell	1.00	0	0
12401	S. Givon	Newcastle	4.00	-7	25
12501	A. Goram	Rangers	5.00	8	11
12601	K. Pryor	Sheffield Wed	2.00	-2	10
12701	M. Taylor	Southampton	0.50	0	0
12801	A. Main	St Johnstone	0.50	9	16
12901	I. Walker	Tottenham	3.00	1	28
13001	L. Miodini	West Ham Utd	2.00	0	7
13101	N. Sullivan	Wimbledon	2.50	3	22

Code	Name	Team	Cost (£m)	Week	Total
30101	B. O'Neill	Aberdeen	2.00	0	-11
30201	T. Adams	Arsenal	3.50	4	13
30301	M. Keown	Arsenal	3.50	0	0
30401	G. Grimandi	Arsenal	2.00	3	15
30501	S. Bould	Arsenal	3.00	4	9
30601	G. Southgate	Aston Villa	3.50	-1	4
30701	U. Eholu	Aston Villa	3.50	-1	11
30801	A. De Zeeuw	Barnsley	1.00	0	-16
30901	A. Moses	Barnsley	0.50	0	-14
31001	M. Appleby	Barnsley	0.50	0	-22
31101	C. Hendry	Blackburn	3.00	5	23
31201	S. Henschow	Blackburn	2.50	5	15
31301	T. Pedersen	Blackburn	2.00	0	0
31401	G. Taggart	Bolton	1.50	-3	1
31501	G. Beagmore	Bolton	1.00	-2	3
31601	C. Faldrough	Bolton	1.00	0	0
31701	M. Fish	Bolton	1.50	0	0
31801	E. Annoni	Celtic	1.50	0	1
31901	M. MacKay	Celtic	3.00	0	0
32001	A. Stubbs	Celtic	3.00	1	12
32101	M. Ripper	Celtic	3.00	5	19
32201	F. Leboeuf	Chelsea	3.00	9	11
32301	M. Duberry	Chelsea	3.00	0	8
32401	S. Clarke	Chelsea	2.50	5	10
32501	L. Lambourde	Chelsea	2.50	0	-1
32601	D. Dalish	Coventry City	1.50	0	0
32701	R. Shaw	Coventry City	1.50	0	12
32801	P. Williams	Coventry City	1.50	0	-1
32901	A. Roberts	Crystal Palace	1.50	4	7
33001	M. Lighty	Crystal Palace	0.75	3	6
33101	T. Tuttle	Crystal Palace	0.75	0	0
33201	I. Stime	Derby County	2.50	0	7
33301	J. Laurson	Derby County	1.50	-2	11
33401	S. Pressley	Dundee Utd	2.00	5	-1
33501	G. Shields	Dunfermline	1.50	-6	-10
33601	S. Bile	Everton	2.50	0	-7
33701	D. Watson	Everton	2.00	5	0
33801	D. Weir	Hibernian	2.00	-1	15
33901	J. Hughes	Leeds United	2.00	4	12
34001	D. Weatherall	Leeds Utd	2.00	1	20
34101	G. Hall	Leeds Utd	2.00	0	8
34201	R. Molenaar	Leeds Utd	2.00	0	5
34301	L. Radebe	Leeds Utd	1.50	0	8
34401	M. Elliott	Leicester City	3.00	0	31
34501	P. Kaemmark	Leicester City	2.00	0	20
34601	S. Walsh	Leicester City	1.50	0	25
34701	M. Wright	Liverpool	3.00	0	5
34801	D. Watt	Liverpool	3.00	0	0
34901	S. Kvarme	Liverpool	3.00	-2	6
35001	H. Berg	Manchester Utd	3.50	-1	22
35101	D. May	Manchester Utd	3.50	0	0
35201	G. Pallister	Manchester Utd	3.50	-1	27
35301	P. Albert	Newcastle Utd	3.00	0	13
35401	D. Peacock	Newcastle Utd	3.00	-3	12
35501	S. Howie	Newcastle Utd	2.00	5	2
35601	A. Platone	Rangers	3.50	5	15
35701	J. Bjorland	Rangers	3.50	5	15
35801	L. Amoruso	Rangers	3.50	0	0
35901	D. Walker	Sheffield Wed	2.00	-2	5
36001	J. Newsome	Sheffield Wed	2.00	-2	2
36101	P. Atherton	Sheffield Wed	2.00	0	-8
36201	R. Dryden	Southampton	1.00	0	-5
36301	C. Lundekvam	Southampton	1.00	0	0
36401	K. Monkou	Southampton	1.00	-1	4
36501	S. McCuskey	St Johnstone	0.50	5	5
36601	S. Campbell	Tottenham	3.00	0	6
36701	J. Scales	Tottenham	2.00	0	6
36801	R. Vega	Tottenham	2.00	0	0
36901	C. Calderwood	Tottenham	2.00	-1	7
37001	R. Ferdinand	West Ham Utd	2.50	4	0
37101	R. Hall	West Ham Utd	2.00	0	0
37201	D. Unsworth	West Ham Utd	2.00	4	-1
37301	S. Potts	West Ham Utd	1.50	5	8
37401	J. Pearce	West Ham Utd	2.00	0	-6
37501	C. Perry	Wimbledon	2.50	0	8
37601	D. Blackwell	Wimbledon	2.50	1	4

Code	Name	Team	Cost (£m)	Week	Total
40605	J. Pollock	Bolton	2.00	1	12
40701	A. Thom	Celtic	4.50	1	14
40702	P. O'Donnell	Celtic	3.00	0	6
40801	R. Binkley	Celtic	3.00	2	6
40901	C. Burley	Celtic	3.00	1	20
41001	D. Wise	Chelsea	4.00	0	16
41101	R. Di Matteo	Chelsea	4.00	2	18
41201	E. Newton	Chelsea	1.50	3	3
41301	G. Poyet	Chelsea	3.00	0	28
41401	G. McAllister	Coventry City	2.50	0	13
41501	T. Solovt	Coventry City	1.50	0	13
41601	J. Salako	Coventry City	1.50	0	13
41701	S. Rodger	Crystal Palace	1.00	2	10
41801	D. Pitcher	Crystal Palace	0.25	0	0
41901	P. Warhurst	Crystal Palace	1.50	1	18
42001	A. Lombardo	Crystal Palace	3.00	2	20
42101	A. Asanovic	Derby County	2.50	0	2
42201	S. Eranko	Derby County	2.50	0	15
42301	D. Powell	Derby County	1.50	0	1
42401	C. Dailly	Derby County	1.50	1	12
42501	R. Van Der Laan	Derby County	1.00	0	8
42601	J. Hunt	Derby County	1.00	0	0
42701	R. Winters	Dundee Utd	3.50	4	21
42801	A. Smith	Dunfermline	2.00	1	19
42901	G. Speed	Everton	3.50	3	23
43001	J. Parkinson	Everton	1.50	0	0
43101	G. Farrelly	Everton	1.50	0	4
43201	D. Williams	Everton	2.00	3	10
43301	N. McCann	Hearts	2.50	0	21
43401	C. Jackson	Hibernian	2.00	0	1
43501	B. Lavelly	Hibernian	2.00	0	18
43601	J. McIlroy	Kilmarnock	2.00	0	0
43701	D. Hopkin	Leeds Utd	3.50	2	18
43801	L. Bowyer	Leeds Utd	3.00	1	5
43901	A. Huxford	Leeds Utd	2.00	-2	13
44001	L. Sharpe	Leeds Utd	2.50	0	0
44101	G. Parker	Leicester City	2.00	0	6
44201	N. Lennon	Leicester City	2.00	1	17
44301	M. Izatt	Leicester City	2.00	1	22
44401	S. Taylor	Leicester City	1.50	0	0
44501	S. McKinnaman	Liverpool	7.00	1	22
44601	O. Leanderson	Liverpool	3.00	0	0
44701	M. Thomas	Liverpool	3.00	0	14
44801	J. Redknapp	Liverpool	3.00	0	0
44901	P. Ince	Liverpool	5.00	1	15
45001	D. Beckham	Manchester Utd	8.00	0	24
45101	R. Giggs	Manchester Utd	7.00	1	20
45201	R. Keane	Manchester Utd	5.00	0	23
45301	N. Butt	Manchester Utd	4.00	0	25
45401	A. Cole	Manchester Utd	5.00	3	13
45501	B. Davies	Motherwell	2.00	0	0
45601	R. Lee	Newcastle Utd	5.00	1	15
45701	K. Gillespie	Newcastle Utd	3.50	3	12
45801	D. Batty	Newcastle Utd	2.50	0	10
45901	J. Barnes	Newcastle Utd	2.50	1	14
46001	B. Laudrup	Rangers	8.00	6	17
46101	P. Gascoigne	Rangers	6.00	9	19
46201	J. Thorne	Rangers	4.00	0	2
46301	J. Albert	Sheffield Wed	4.00	0	14
46401	B. Carlton	Sheffield Wed	3.00	1	26
46501	J. Magilton	Sheffield Wed	2.00	1	13
46601	M. Penbridge	Sheffield Wed	2.00	0	8
46701	G. Hyde	Sheffield Wed	1.00	0	4
46801	R. Slater	Southampton	0.75	1	4
46901	N. Maddison	Southampton	0.75	0	11
47001	K. Richardson	Southampton	0.50	1	6
47101	C. Palmer	Southampton	1.50	1	4
47201	A. Sakerloglu	St Johnstone	0.75	3	11
47301	A. Sinton	Tottenham	3.00	2	7
47401	D. Anderson	Tottenham	3.00	1	13
47501	R. Fox	Tottenham	2.00	2	1
47601	D. Howells	Tottenham	2.00	2	13
47701	D. Ginola	Tottenham	3.00	5	14
47801	E. Barkovic	West Ham Utd	2.50	6	27
47901	S. Lomas	West Ham Utd	2.50	3	14
48001	J. Moncur	West Ham Utd	2.00	3	9
48101	R. Earle	Wimbledon	4.50	5	16
48201	N. Ardley	Wimbledon	2.00	1	6
48301	V. Jones	Wimbledon	2.00	2	8
48401	M. Hughes	Wimbledon	2.00	2	9
48501	C. Hughes	Wimbledon	1.50	2	11

Code	Name	Team	Cost (£m)	Week	Total
50101	B. Dodds	Aberdeen	4.00	4	16
50201	I. Wright	Arsenal	7.50	0	42
50301	D. Bergkamp	Arsenal	8.50	1	43
50401	D. Yorke	Aston Villa	7.50	1	20

THE TIMES

2

INSIDE
SECTION
2
TODAY



BUSINESS

Fraudsters lent
£1.3m to company
run by Venables
PAGE 31



LAW

Leave those schools
alone: the dangers
of suing educators
PAGES 39-41



SPORT

Schmeichel happy
trying to keep
United united
PAGES 46-52

TELEVISION
AND
RADIO
PAGES
50, 51

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

TUESDAY OCTOBER 21 1997

Clocking on: How the FTSE 100 fared on the first day of Sets



SE survives Brown Monday test

BY ADAM JONES

THE London Stock Exchange's new electronic trading system survived a baptism of fire yesterday, after a speech from Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, on European economic and monetary union (EMU) sparked an early 119-point fall in the FTSE 100.

Mr Brown formally launched the system, called Sets, at 8.30am in the exchange's concourse. Minutes later, he clarified the Government's position on EMU in an unscheduled speech, saying that Britain was unlikely to join in the first wave in 1999.

FTSE 100 stocks, already dropping, fell to 119 points below the index's opening level as Mr Brown finished his impromptu speech.

His timing was attacked by senior traders, who said they faced enough of a challenge coping with the new system. One dealing desk head said: "That sort of waffling around on EMU is not helpful. It's naive." The performance of

Sets was generally hailed as a success in the City, however.

The new dealing system completes the computerisation started by Big Bang, and brings the exchange into line with many overseas exchanges and its last-making domestic rival, Tradepoint.

FTSE 100 stocks can now be traded through the exchange without market-makers by matching buyers and sellers on an electronic order book.

The FTSE 100 recovered to close 60.1 points down at 5211.09 in very tight trading

that exacerbated price movements. Trading in Railtrack, Hays, ICI and Wolsley was briefly suspended when their prices moved 10 per cent or more. Out of a total London volume of 493 million shares, 208 million were FTSE 100 shares. Of these, 42 per cent went through the order book, comparing favourably with long-term predictions of 40 to 50 per cent.

Mondays are traditionally slow and the exchange said trading was light in several international markets. However, the head dealer at one institution said there would be cause for alarm if trading levels did not pick up significantly by the end of the week. Many fund managers had been content to sit out first-day price fluctuations, he said. They were also cautious of the extra time required to trade through the order book.

The Stock Exchange said the dealing spread, the difference between buy and sell prices, was cut on many stocks as predicted, although they were initially much wider in

some cases. Around half of all FTSE 100 shares traded with an average spread of less than 0.5 per cent. BT, Shell and Rolls-Royce were among shares where investors benefited from this narrowing.

The exchange, which has already made several alterations to the system in response to requests from its members, is facing pressure to tweak the electronic trading regime further. Brokers and institutions want it to act as the central counterparty in each deal.

Buyers and sellers would then effectively be always dealing with the exchange as a middleman.

This would cut the cost of trading, since a buyer or seller would only be settling with one party. Under the current arrangement, a big order sitting on the order book will often be "nibbled at" by several other member firms, leading to costly multiple settlements.

Commentary, page 29
Stock market, page 30

Industry and the City confused by policy statements on euro

BY JANET BUSH AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

A WEEKEND of often contradictory ministerial statements and briefings left both the City and industry confused about the Government's policy on a single European currency.

Shares and gilt-edged stocks, which made large gains three weeks ago on reports that ministers were warning towards the euro, yesterday slumped as the Government appeared to signal that Britain will not join a single currency during the lifetime of this Parliament.

The pound rallied sharply, briefly regaining all the losses incurred over the past three weeks. It closed three pence higher at £1.5288, and its effective index rose a full point to 1015.5. Dealers predicted that the pound will remain volatile while uncertainty persists over EMU policy.

Ruth Lea, head of the Institute of Directors' policy unit, said: "What we have seen is

spin doctors crushed by reality and the reality is what has happened in the markets." She said that there was serious confusion in the markets about the mixed messages from the Government.

Business and financial market leaders yesterday expressed dismay at the inconsistencies of government statements on EMU.

Asked whether he now understood the Government's line on EMU, a spokesman for the British Chambers of Commerce said: "Do you mean based on Saturday's newspapers or Monday's?"

Barclays Bank said that policy uncertainties are undermining business preparations for the euro.

Grant Phillips, director of Barclays' business banking euro programme, said: "My greatest fear is that our customers will stand back from getting ready because of everything they have heard on the

political front." Barclays' latest survey of companies that already do business with continental Europe found that 65 per cent had still done nothing to prepare for the euro and, of those, 60 per cent do not intend to prepare. "That is a comment on political uncertainty," Mr Phillips said.

ICI Britain's exporters strongly support the single currency, a new survey of 1,000 companies shows today — though with export confidence at a five-year low, they expect jobs to be lost if the pound remains high. Two thirds of exporting companies say that British participation in a single currency would be helpful to their company, according to the latest DHL quarterly export indicator. The level of support for a single currency, among exporters is markedly up on even a year ago, when only just over half of exporting firms said they would welcome the euro.

that exacerbated price movements. Trading in Railtrack, Hays, ICI and Wolsley was briefly suspended when their prices moved 10 per cent or more. Out of a total London volume of 493 million shares, 208 million were FTSE 100 shares. Of these, 42 per cent went through the order book, comparing favourably with long-term predictions of 40 to 50 per cent.

Mondays are traditionally slow and the exchange said trading was light in several international markets. However, the head dealer at one institution said there would be cause for alarm if trading levels did not pick up significantly by the end of the week. Many fund managers had been content to sit out first-day price fluctuations, he said. They were also cautious of the extra time required to trade through the order book.

The Stock Exchange said the dealing spread, the difference between buy and sell prices, was cut on many stocks as predicted, although they were initially much wider in



Gordon Brown launches the new order-driven system

Brokers phone orders as new system falters

BY RICHARD MILES, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

RETAIL stockbrokers were thrown into confusion for the first hour of trading yesterday when two of the market-makers' automated systems failed to get off the ground on time.

Stockbrokers complained they had to resort to the telephone to buy and sell their clients' shares after experiencing a series of problems with the trading systems of Kleinwort Benson and BZW.

Stephen Pinner, managing director of Cater Deal, the execution-only stockbroker owned by Abbey National, said: "It was pandemonium, much as we feared. I had to pick up the phone for the first time in 20 years."

Another execution-broker, Sharelink, reported problems with all the market-making systems, forcing its dealers back on the telephone for some parts of the day. "The first hour was hectic and difficult. When the market is so volatile, it is difficult getting through on the phone," said

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FTSE 100	5211.0	(-60.1)
FTSE All share	2454.30	(-25.89)
Nikkei 225	17294.51	(-183.91)
Dow Jones	7863.49	(+16.48)
S&P Composite	949.54	(+4.38)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long term	6.85%	(6.85%)
Yield	5.75%	(5.75%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-mth Interbank	7 1/4%	(7 1/4%)
Life long gilt	119 1/2	(119 1/2)
STERLING		
New York	1.6299	(1.6185)
London	1.6306	(1.6189)
DM	2.8804	(2.8597)
FF	6.8928	(6.8928)
Sfr	2.3395	(2.3818)
Yen	197.78	(194.20)
S index	101.5	(100.5)
GOLD		
Tokyo close	Yen 121.43	
GOLD		
Brant 15-day (Dec)	\$19.80	(\$19.75)
GOLD		
London close	\$324.06	(\$324.55)

Former Landhurst chiefs jailed

BY JASON NISSE

THE former chairman and finance director of Landhurst Leasing, the luxury car finance group whose involvement in Formula One racing brought its downfall five years ago, have been jailed for three years and 18 months respectively.

Last month, Ted Ball, 50, pleaded guilty to eight counts of corruption, and David Ashworth, 45, to two counts of corruption. Yesterday at the Central Criminal Court, Judge Henry Pownall QC said the pair had changed their pleas from not guilty to half past the eleventh hour. He added that they had damaged the good name of the lease finance industry and breached the trust of banks that lent the group £12 million. Only £70 million of this has been recovered.

The seeds of the group's downfall came when it helped to finance the purchase of the Brabham Formula One racing team in 1990. This led Landhurst into a web of deception to hide the group's financial problems from its banks.

Ball, whose clients included Terry Venables, the former England coach, Frank Warren, the boxing promoter, and a host of sports and City celebrities, admitted corruptly accepting £420,000 in secret commissions to keep funding the Brabham team. Ashworth admitted accepting payments of £120,000.

John Snow, the former England fast bowler, a business associate of Ball's, gave character evidence, saying he appeared an honest citizen.

Unilever £573m expansion

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

UNILEVER has dipped into its £3 billion cash pile to buy Kibon, Brazil's biggest ice cream maker, from Philip Morris for £573 million.

It is the first big acquisition by Unilever since it sold its specialty chemicals businesses to ICI in May '95 billion. It will give Unilever overall leadership of the Latin American ice cream market.

Ever since the ICI deal, rumours have circulated that Unilever would bounce on one of its rivals such as Heinz, Campbells or Reckitt & Colman. The rumours came in spite of Niall FitzGerald, the joint chairman, insisting that Unilever would invest its cash in emerging markets and in certain key product categories, of which ice cream is one.

Kibon supplies 60 per cent of the Brazilian ice cream market. It had net sales of £204 million last year and an operating profit of £46 million. Its net asset value at the end of July was £64 million. The deal includes the acquisition of the Philip Morris share of a 50-50 joint

venture ice cream business, Sorvane, based in north east Brazil. Sorvane had total net sales of £42 million last year.

Kibon's head office and main factory are in São Paulo. The business employs 2,300 people. The Latin American ice cream market is estimated to be worth £985 million and Unilever expects it to double in size over the next decade. Unilever shares rose 7p to 485p.

ITT accepts Starwood bid

BY OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK AND DOMINIC WALSH

ITT, the hotel and gaming group subject to an \$11 billion (£6.74 billion) hostile takeover bid from Hilton Hotels Corporation, has accepted a \$13.3 billion white knight offer from Starwood Lodging.

Starwood, which recently paid \$1.6 billion for Westin Hotels & Resorts, owns or manages 162 hotels in 24 countries. ITT owns the Sheraton chain of 424 hotels in 62 countries, including London's Sheraton Park Tower and Park Lane hotels.

The combined group, earning

annual revenues of more than \$10 billion, would dwarf its competitors.

Starwood, said to be interested in buying Arcadian International, the UK hotel group, is offering \$82 per share, compared with Hilton's \$70 bid, and would assume \$3.5 billion of debt. Hilton's bid would pay 50 per cent in cash, while Starwood would pay 80 per cent in shares.

Barry Sternlicht, Starwood's executive chairman, said the deal "complements our current holdings in every part of the world by strengthening our presence in key markets."

Mr Sternlicht won over the ITT board after promising to keep on the ITT directors. Steven Bollenbach, the Hilton chief executive, has branded Rand Araskog, the ITT chairman, incompetent and is intent on a management clear-out.

Starwood and ITT expect to save \$100 million a year. The deal is expected to be completed in the first quarter of next year, subject to regulatory approval. Hilton is expected to respond to the new bid shortly.

A pessimist is a person who looks both ways before crossing a one-way street.

Our fixed-rate mortgage without redemption penalties means you'll know exactly what's coming.

John Charcol

6.85%
7.1%
APR

Talk about a better mortgage.

JOHN CHARCOL
0800 71 81 91

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Electronic football match tickets 'on way'

By Jason Nisse

ELECTRONIC season tickets allowing football fans to watch live Premier League matches on a pay-per-view basis could be launched within two years, Freddy Fletcher, chief executive of Newcastle United, said yesterday.

Mr Fletcher said he expected BSkyB to strike a deal with the Premier League later this season to have trials of pay-per-view. "I believe in the 1999-2000 season Sky will be offering electronic season tickets," Mr Fletcher said.

BSkyB, which is 40 per cent owned by News International, the publisher of *The Times*, declined to comment on his remarks. It has always refused to set a timetable for the introduction of pay-per-view. The current BSkyB deal with the Premier League runs until 2001.

Electronic season tickets are available in Italy. However, English clubs are concerned that any pay-per-view deal should not affect live attendances.

Mr Fletcher confirmed that Newcastle was in talks with BSkyB and Granada about setting up a Newcastle United channel on satellite and cable TV.

Manchester United has set up a similar venture and BSkyB and Granada are keen to sign up another top team, believed to be Liverpool.

TV revenue was important to Newcastle last season, where a £18 million boost from the club's run in the UEFA Cup, helped operating profits to jump from £3.6 million to £8.1 million in the year ending July 31.

The group made a £1.4 million profit from transfer dealings, compared with a £27.6 million loss the previous year, when the club bought Alan Shearer, the England captain.

Earnings per share were 6.9p, compared with a loss of 22.6p, and there is a debut dividend of 0.5p. The club ended the year with £31.3 million of cash and is well advanced with its application to build a new 55,000 seat stadium near the current ground at St James' Park. A company set up by four cable groups has completed a deal with Warner Bros International Television for non-exclusive rights to all Warner films distributed in the UK. The deal will allow the TeleWest, NTL, General Cable and Diamond Cable to launch a pay-per-view movie service from early 1998.



Global ambition: Nick Land, left, of Ernst & Young, and Colin Sharman of KPMG after confirming plans to merge

EU referral will delay KPMG-E&Y merger

By Robert Bruce

ERNST & YOUNG and KPMG yesterday confirmed plans to merge and become the world's largest accountancy firm.

But the move has been referred to European Union competition authorities and, despite going forward to a partnership vote in each of the firms around the end of the year, it will be held up until next March probably.

Colin Sharman of KPMG, who would become chairman of the merged firm, said that he was "reasonably confident that we will get through the regulatory hurdles", which will involve competition authorities in Japan and America as well as Brussels.

But Nick Land, currently

UK managing partner of Ernst & Young, said that partnerships were at a disadvantage in Europe. "The basic competition rules were not written for our type of business," he said. "The rules make it harder for partnerships than companies."

Unlike the proposed merger of Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand, whose announcement last month triggered the current merger panic in the accounting world, the emphasis of the Ernst & Young and KPMG combination would be on Europe rather than America. Whereas the chairman and chief executive officer proposed for the Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand combination

were their existing American chiefs, the head of the combined Ernst & Young and KPMG firm would be Mr Sharman, KPMG's UK senior partner, and the administrative headquarters would be in Amsterdam.

Emphasising the European dimension, Mr Sharman said that on fee income Europe was a slightly bigger market than America, while Mr Land pointed to the expectation of "a real acceleration of European cross-border activity".

But all four of the "big six" accounting firms involved in these massive mergers are wary of any backlash from clients over the perceived loss of choice. In the UK the four firms already audit 88 of the

FTSE 100 companies. Mr Sharman said that when talking to clients, chairmen and chief executive officers had understood the logic behind the merger whereas "finance directors expressed concern".

Both firms said that the real reasons, apart from trying to leapfrog the Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand merger into the top slot, was the cost of investing in technology. Mr Land said that "the name of the game is investment". The firms currently spend between 7 and 9 per cent of revenues on technology and technology developments.

The new organisation would have 12,800 partners worldwide and fees of \$18.3 billion (£11.25 billion).

Barclays and unions clash over support for strike

By Richard Miles
Banking Correspondent

BARCLAYS was forced to shut high street branches for a second time yesterday as unions threatened further industrial action in a pay dispute.

The unions clashed with Barclays over the impact of the 24-hour strike, with the bank claiming that only 176 branches failed to open for business, compared with 209 on Friday. The unions put the figure at 300.

UNIFI, the Barclays staff federation, and the Banking Insurance & Finance Union, said support had grown for strike action over a new performance-related pay scheme. They argue the scheme amounts to a pay and pensions freeze for 25,000 workers.

Bob Drake, UNIFI assistant general secretary, said 28,000 workers had refused to cross picket lines yesterday. However, Barclays rejected this, saying only 4,000 of its 60,000 staff failed to turn up for work. It added: "The strike is continuing to have little or no impact in most areas of the country and over 90 per cent of staff national are working normally."

Union leaders will meet over the next week to decide whether to call for more action, which could extend to one-hour stoppages as well as further strikes. An overtime ban is in force already.

Jim Lowe, Biff's assistant secretary, said the dispute was picking up momentum. "Our members see the huge payouts Barclays are offering in the City to get rid of some people at BZW and keep others, while finding no new money for the branch staff."

Support for the strike, is understood to have grown after reports that Bill Harrison, the former head of BZW, received a payoff valued at £5 million.

Capel-Cure Myers censured by SFA

THE Securities and Futures Authority, the regulator, has officially reprimanded the investment director and chief compliance officer of Capel-Cure Myers, the private client stockbroker. The action by the SFA, confirming an earlier £150,000 fine, concerns the stockbroker's management of a portion of the Mirror Group Pension Scheme. The ownership of millions of pounds of assets from the scheme became the subject of an enormous legal wrangle after Robert Maxwell, who ran Mirror Group Newspapers, died in 1991.

CCM, and other companies involved in managing the pension money, were eventually forced to pay £32 million into the pension scheme in 1994. The SFA found that CCM's records were "practically useless for the purpose of ascertaining who had custody of what stock". It also found that "CCM fell materially below the minimum acceptable standards in 1990-91 for internal control and ensuring compliance with the rules." Tony Pattison, investment director, was rebuked by the SFA, and Richard Nead, the compliance officer, was reprimanded. Both are still with the company.

NDS computer trials

NDS, the satellite technology group, has begun trials of broadcasting vast amounts of data to personal computers 1,000 times faster than telephone modems. If the tests, which include delivery of data from *The Times*, are successful, NDS technology is expected to be an integral part of the 200-channel digital service due to be launched next spring by British Sky Broadcasting. NDS, is a subsidiary of News Corporation, whose News International publishes *The Times*.

France Télécom floats

FRANCE TELECOM shares soared on their debuts in Paris and New York and immediately earned the telecommunications group the rank of highest French company by market value. The shares opened in Paris at Fr215 (£22), compared with an issue price for institutional investors of Fr187 and for retail investors of Fr182. The sale of the Government's 23 per cent stake is France's largest stock market flotation. On Wall Street, France Telecom's shares started at \$34 1/2.

Budgens eyes expansion

BUDGENS, the high street supermarkets business, is set to buy the British franchise for the 7-Eleven convenience store chain from the current holder, Jardine Matheson. The purchase of the 58 stores would constitute a major expansion for Budgens, which is based in the south of England.

Budgens, which celebrates its 125th anniversary this year, has 110 stores of its own, as well as 11 forecourt operations at BP and Q8 petrol stations.

Diller in \$4bn TV deal

BARRY DILLER, the American entertainment mogul who pioneered 24-hour TV home shopping, has bought the television operations of Universal Studios for \$4 billion (£2.45 billion). Mr Diller's Home Shopping Network will combine its operations with Universal's USA Network and Sci-Fi Network, and change its name to USA Networks. The deal comes a month after Seagram, Universal's parent company, took sole control of USA Network in a \$1.7 billion buyout of its partner, Viacom.

Halma issues warning

SHARES in Halma slipped 8 1/2p, to 129p, yesterday after the safety and environmental technology group gave warning that sluggish demand in water and gas detection markets and the strength of sterling continued to hit its business. Halma said it would close two or three of its poorly performing, smaller subsidiaries before Christmas, leading to a £1 million one-off hit at the year-end. It added that it expects to take a £2 million hit from sterling in its interim results.

IBT increases NAV

THE International Biotechnology Trust increased its net asset value by 13.5 per cent, to 127.17p, in the year to end August, and said its equity investments had achieved a weighted annual rate of return of 23.5 per cent. IBT's investments over the last year or so include £3.5 million in Core Group and £4.4 million in Biocompare International. It doubled its money on its first divestment, the \$14.8 million (£9.1 million) sale of its stake in SangStat Medical Corporation.

Owen cuts its loss

OWEN & ROBINSON, the Capolito Roma fashion and Foothold sports footwear retailer, has cut its half-year loss from £2.5 million to £602,000. The loss was mainly because of clearance of slow-moving stock at Foothold, which saw a 20 per cent drop in like-for-like sales. Turnover in the half year to August 16 slipped from £11.9 million to £11.6 million. The loss per share eased to 0.44p (3.37p loss). The company, which is to be renamed Cadore, is not paying an interim dividend.

RJB's leading negotiator dies

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

RJB's key negotiator in the crucial contract talks with the electricity generators died suddenly yesterday.

Paul Kerry, 49, died at his home near Retford in Nottinghamshire after apparently suffering a heart attack.

Richard Budge, chief executive, heads the negotiations with the electricity generators that will effectively dictate how much of the coal industry survives after the end of government arrangements for coal sales next March.

Mr Kerry, who used to work for British Coal, led the day-to-day wrangles with the three main generators, handling the

vital differences between the coal industry and generators over price and volume.

Mr Kerry's death comes as the talks reach a critical stage amid warnings that up to ten pits may close if the Government refuses to offer support to the industry. The talks are the first to be held between the electricity generators and the coal industry since both were put into private hands.

A spokesman for RJB said Mr Kerry would be greatly missed, saying: "He was a great enthusiast for the coal industry." It was too early to say who would now direct the talks, said RJB.

M&G details shake-up of fund range

M&G, one of the oldest fund managers, has written to 250,000 investors to detail a shake-up of its fund range. (Gavin Lumsden writes)

M&G is to focus on growth blue chip stocks alongside small and medium-sized companies. Criticisms that its funds, which have performed badly in the past three years, were all the same, have led M&G to merge two trusts and change the objectives of six others.

In the biggest change its Extra Yield unit trust is to be renamed Extra Income and merged with the Equity Income fund to create a £923 million unit trust.

QMH writedown was 'big mistake'

By Dominic Walsh

THE controversial £922 million asset writedown at Queens Moat Houses, the debt-laden hotel group, was "possibly the worst mis-statement in British accounting history", the High Court was told yesterday.

In a written submission, David Tonkin, a forensic accountant, said the revaluation for the 1992 accounts conducted by Jones Lang Wootton, the chartered surveyors, was a "colossal mistake".

Dr Tonkin, acting for John Bairstow, the former QMH chairman, who, with three other former directors, is suing for unfair dismissal, has

reconstructed the 1992 figures, which showed total losses of £104 million, to show a £97 million profit. A similar "stripping-out" exercise by an expert acting for QMH produced a £37 million loss.

Opening his case, Mr Bairstow rejected allegations that he had falsified profits through a series of "sham" transactions. He said the accusations, ranging from inflated property disposals to dubious hotel sale and leaseback deals, were "simply a diversionary tactic by current management to deflect attention from their own behaviour".

Martin Marcus, the former deputy chairman, added: "If Dr Tonkin is right then [QMH's] current management must inevitably find themselves in embarrassing difficulty." Mr Marcus said that whereas he and his colleagues had attempted to maximise shareholder value, the current directors had "managed to create massive losses and paid no dividends".

He claimed that the banks had only been able to seize control of Queens Moat in 1993 because the asset writedowns and other exceptional losses meant the group's banking covenants had been broken. "It must be made clear that none of the covenants had actually been broken by us, as the 1992 accounts which did break them were prepared by the new management." The case continues.



Armstrong: admired as deal-maker

New AT&T chief may upset BT plan

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

AT&T, the largest US telephone group, yesterday prepared itself for a big acquisition by appointing a new chief executive. Michael Armstrong, chief executive of Hughes Electronics, needs to respond quickly to the merger plans of MCI, which is AT&T's biggest competitor and an ally of BT.

AT&T's prospects in the consolidating telecommunications sector have been flagging over the past three months. The group missed countless opportunities while preoccupied with finding a successor to Robert Allen, who is to retire on November 1.

Analysis said the appointment could affect the three-way merger talks be-

tween BT-MCI and GTE, which made a \$26 billion bid for MCI last week. GTE may start merger talks with AT&T if a \$30 billion bid by WorldCom for MCI looks likely to succeed. Previous merger talks between GTE and AT&T stalled after Mr Allen announced his retirement. One analyst said: "MCI and BT executives will fear Armstrong a lot more than WorldCom's boss, Bernie Ebbers. Armstrong could break up the GTE-MCI-BT alliance with a big offer to GTE."

Mr Armstrong, 59, is known as an aggressive, nimble-footed deal-maker. He rapidly transformed Hughes from one of America's premier defence

companies into a powerhouse in the satellite television sector. He sold its entire defence business to Raytheon for \$9.5 billion soon after arriving in 1992. AT&T hailed Mr Armstrong as "a leader with exceptional technological vision and a good understanding of the forces transforming the communications services industry". John Ziegler, 50, was appointed president to be groomed as an eventual successor.

Mr Armstrong had been considered for AT&T's top job before. He was interviewed last year about becoming president and future chief executive, but he declined because Mr Allen made no commitment to stepping down.

We won't put our signature to any old car

A used Mercedes has a name to live up to. So we put our name on every one our dealers sell. Under the Signature scheme, every car is "signed off" by the Mercedes-trained technicians who check it (with a comprehensive multi-point check) and by the Dealer Principal. (What's more it also comes with certificates from independent bodies who have investigated its mileage and history). So when you buy a used car from a Mercedes-Benz dealership, you can rest assured that whatever its age, its reputation is as good as new. For further information please call 0800 645 440.

Signature



Mercedes-Benz

Spinning out of control



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

A nasty attack of dizziness hit the City yesterday. A sinister effect: confusion and consternation reigned. The Stock Exchange had already bravely chosen to ignore the onsets and launch its new electronic order book on the tenth anniversary of Black Monday, but the Government contrived to heighten the tensions by providing a backdrop of near chaos.

The system survived remarkably well. By the close of play, the credibility rating of Gavin Casey and his team at the Stock Exchange was somewhat higher than that of Chancellor Gordon Brown and his boys.

The electronic order book did all that it was supposed to do, most of the glitches having been ironed out during the series of colourful dress rehearsals that preceded yesterday's grand opening. The Government's spin doctors do not have the honour of a dress rehearsal: their words have real and immediate effects. After fanning the uncertainties of yesterday, perhaps they will now realise the need for a careful study of the script before they rush into action.

For business and the City one of the most vital issues of the moment is the relationship between Britain and the rest of Europe and, in particular, the single currency. Despite the vocal demands of a few, the business world is not committed en masse to Britain joining EMU

but it does not want to be left floundering in the dark trying to divine what Government policy may be. In recent weeks the outpourings — some public, many more private — have served merely to leave uncertainty where clarity was what was required.

When several voices speak, the message can be muddled. When the voices are unattributable if not anonymous, the scope for misinterpretation, if not misleading, is magnified.

The country needs to be clear about the Government's stance on EMU. "Wait and see" was a defensible position, but nods and winks suggesting that there was a determination not to wait very long destroyed the intellectual argument behind it and necessitated the spelling out of a time scale. If the line now is definitely that there will be no move into EMU during this Parliament, it needs to be spoken out clearly and without a follow-up call from a spin doctor explaining just what this means.

The Chancellor is perfectly capable of making himself understood on this issue and any other. After this latest fiasco, he may feel that his special advisers need reining in a little, or

perhaps they should all at least agree on the script in advance.

The recent television documentaries on Mr Brown and his close knit team of special advisers stunned some viewers with its insight into the world of spin. But spin does not just influence the media. What has been made patently clear in recent days is the effect that spin has on the markets and on the wider business world. The Government must take note, and take care.

Six into three is the wrong bean count

Senior accountants surely realise that the music has to stop soon in their merger game. None wants to be left at a competitive disadvantage when that happens and all seem to define that by size.

Merging Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse to form an international firm with 8,500

partners looked bizarre enough, when Goldman Sachs manages with fewer than 200. Now KPMG and Ernst & Young aim to bolt together a business with 11,700 partners and 163,000 workers. If their logic holds, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, stranded at the bottom of the premier league, would presumably need to leaping the lot by embracing Arthur Andersen, now world number one.

Not by accident, the timing of the KPMG/EY response puts this issue in the spotlight. The virtues of one merger or another are scarcely the point. The key question that customers, investors and competition authorities need to ask is whether it is reasonable to have only three accountancy firms that can offer a full service internationally, instead of six today and eight not so long ago.

Will corporate customers' choice be improved by the extra resources three mega-firms can

supply, or cut by having only two alternatives to the present auditor or adviser? Will hourly charges for accountancy partners fall because of lower costs or rise because they have managed to get rid of the competition they complained so bitterly about a few years ago? Will the usefulness and probity of company accounts be enhanced by standardisation or become stuck at a level of mediocrity tacitly agreed by the triumvirate?

Clearly, there would not be enough independent firms left to advise all the main parties to a complex deal. In many contract negotiations, financings, receiverships or mergers, customers would have no choice at all. The doctrine of conflicts of interest would finally have to be swept away in favour of new sets of portable Chinese walls within the palaces of the Big Three.

Europe's erratic competition authorities and America's anti-trust lawyers need to turn their

gaze from more politically interesting mergers and focus on accountancy. Perhaps the most compelling case to stop all mergers between the Big Six is that new entry to this charmed circle appears virtually impossible. Smaller firms cannot challenge the Big Six. They should not be asked to save us from the dominant rule of a Big Three.

Dangers on the Delphic route

It would not need one of the world's major accounting firms to calculate that there are more efficient ways of raising capital than that employed by Delphi, which has just had to part with a tenth of its new cash in the form of fees.

Yet John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading, is still apparently wedded to encouraging companies to follow the Delphic route instead of the traditional British rights issue. He has apparently made clear to City institutions his intention of referring the issue of underwriting fees to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission next month unless something radical can change his mind.

Delphi alone would not be enough to dissuade him from making the MMC reference. But last week's revolutionary rights issue by Schroders on behalf of housing group Berkeley should already have made him rethink his position.

The City has moved to address the problems that he originally highlighted and it would be stubborn bordering on pig-headed for him to determinedly press on with a reference now.

He might be doing British business a bigger favour if he took a look at how our competition policy links in with that of Europe, where a raft of decisions now waits on the deliberations of the Commissioner. Karel Van Miert, P&O is still to learn whether it may proceed with its link with Stena, after almost a year of paralysing indecision.

Costly yen

AS many eyebrows have been raised over Nomura's generosity in buying William Hill and Imtempore as were hoisted over prices paid for top City sites by Japanese developers. So let's hope Nomura fares better than Kumigai Gumi, the top 1980s enthusiast. It has taken a £1.23 billion extraordinary loss to restructure its overseas property portfolio, including a £770 million loss on sales of 18 properties, four of them in Britain. Ah so.

Hambros set to review bank future

By RICHARD MILES, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

HAMBROS, one of Britain's few remaining independent merchant banks, could be broken up after confirming yesterday the appointment of Schroders to advise on its future strategy.

Schroders has been given a brief to look at all options for the bank, including the possibility of spinning off its estate agency arm, Hambro Countrywide, and the loss adjuster, Hambro Insurance Services.

The review comes after pressure from institutional investors disappointed by the bank's performance. Since 1994 Hambros shares have fallen from 47½p to around 27½p yesterday. Regent Pacific, the Hong Kong-based fund manager and the most vociferous rebel investor, last week lifted its 3.5 per cent stake in Hambros to above 4 per cent.

Hambros said yesterday that it was "ruling nothing in, and nothing out", including retaining the current composition of the group. Contrary to

earlier reports, the bank said Schroders' recommendations were unlikely to be disclosed when it announces its interim figures in mid-November.

Schroders is believed to have held informal discussions with a number of firms interested in buying all or part of Hambros. However, the holding company of San Paolo Bank, the largest shareholder with 16.6 per cent, denied speculation that it would launch a bid for the group.

In September, Fishers International, a loss-adjusting firm, made a cash and share offer of 129 pence per share for Hambro Insurance Services, which is 51 per cent owned by the bank, but was rebuffed. Since then, Hambro Insurance's stock has risen from just over 80p to more than £1.

Guardian Royal Exchange, the composite insurer that controls more than 9 per cent of Hambros, refused to say whether it was interested in buying part of the bank.

Times, page 30

S&N unveils brewing shake-up

By DOMINIC WALSH

SCOTTISH & NEWCASTLE yesterday unveiled a management shake-up of its brewing division after the integration of Courage, which was acquired two years ago.

Guy Dickson, head of Scottish Courage, is to continue as chairman, with Graham Kendrick, managing director of Courage, becoming divisional managing director. John Gore, head of brewing, is to lose his job in the reshuffle.

A new executive committee of Robin Alexander, managing director, off-trade; John Dunsmuir, managing director, on-trade; Tom Ward, head of brewing and logistics; and Colin Wood, marketing director, will report to Mr Kendrick.

Renegotiating the contract to supply its beer to Imtempore will be its biggest challenge.

American appointed to run TI

By PAUL DURMAN

TI GROUP, the automotive and aerospace engineering company, has appointed Bill Laule to succeed Sir Christopher Lewin as chief executive. Mr Laule, who is 49 and was born in Ohio, joined TI four years ago as president of the North American arm of Bundy, which makes systems to carry brake fluid and fuel.

Sir Christopher, 65, who will remain as chairman, became TI's chief executive in 1986. To ensure continuity, he will chair a new committee, whose other members will be Mr Laule and Martin Angle, TI's finance director.

Mr Laule, an engineering graduate who spent 15 years with Rockwell International, said that key issues for TI would be finding the right acquisitions, and ensuring a strong management team.

Usborne considers special dividend

By FRASER NELSON

USBORNE, the farming services company chaired by Lord Parkinson, could pay a special dividend to shareholders after failing to identify an acquisition to expand its core business.

The company, which now imports and mixes fertiliser, has £5.37 million in the bank after selling other divisions, but neither Lord Parkinson, who is also chairman of the Conservative Party, nor John Aiken, its finance director, have been able to find anything to spend it on.

Mr Aiken said the company could spend no more than £1 million on its Southampton fertiliser factory, and would have to consider a special

payout. He said: "We can't sit with money for ever and a day. We have no timetable, but I would not like to be sitting here if nothing had happened in a year."

Pre-tax profits fell to £16,000 from £112 million in the year to June 30 after a £951,000 goodwill write-off. A tax rebate of £49,000 left earnings at 0.15p (2.59p).

David Thompson, founder of Hilldown Holdings, owns 74.8 per cent of Usborne but has passed on the 1p dividend proposed for the past financial year. If he passes on a special payout, the remaining 25.2 per cent of shareholders will share the cash pile.



When you link your company's sites together, everyone can access the data they need, when they need it. Whether those sites are here

or abroad. In the past if you wanted to do this, it took huge commitment,

highly complex systems and large sums of money. Now, it just takes...

ENERGIS
Telecoms
for companies

Log on to www.energis.co.uk

or call 0800 316 1610

In the interest of security your calls may be monitored or recorded

MPUS
s' bounty

Beat of the numbers drum grows louder

Jon Ashworth discovers strongly opposing reactions to the merger mania consuming the UK accountancy profession

Accountants are not a nostalgic bunch, but if they were the winebars would be packed with bean-counters sobbing into their spritzers. A decade ago, the profession was replete with names rich in history, among them Peat Marwick McLintock, Arthur Young, and Deloitte Haskins & Sells. The latest batch of mega-mergers distances firms still further from their roots, and has worrying implications for UK plc.

The intended link-up of KPMG, headed in the UK by Colin Sharrman, and Ernst & Young, fronted by the affable Nick Land, steals much of the thunder from Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse, which announced their own merger last month. Both sets of firms are beating the same drum: stressing the huge savings to be made in creating a new audit programme, or building operations from scratch in somewhere like China. KPMG puts the cost of opening in China at \$20 million (£12.5 million) a year for ten years. All the better if done by one firm rather than two.

Ian Brindle, UK senior partner of Price Waterhouse, rained home the message to his own staff recently. As multi-national companies moved in to previously closed economies such as China and Russia, so the demand for a wide range of financial services would grow. This would require massive investment in people and infrastructure. Combining PW and Coopers would increase the invest-

ment pool, and prevent needless duplication of investment in developing markets.

Not everyone is convinced. Finance directors privately express concern about the loss of an ability to "shop around", and are worried about potential conflicts of interest. A survey of finance directors after PW/Coopers broke showed that only 26 per cent were in favour, while 45

As our clients expand into new markets they expect us to have global abilities

Philip Laskawy, Colin Sharrman

per cent thought it should be stopped by competition authorities.

Philip Laskawy, international chairman of Ernst & Young, and Mr Sharrman, international chairman of KPMG, said in a joint statement yesterday: "As our clients expand into

new markets they expect us to have the global abilities and resources to provide them with the specialist services they need. We will now have significantly more service capabilities, and people in the key industry segments, functional areas and geographic markets."

Reaction was mixed. Chris Swinson, senior partner of BDO Stoy Hayward, and deputy president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), said the mergers reflected a contradiction within the market. "The market is exhibiting two contradictory forces. On the one hand, the market is seeking global firms to provide global responsiveness," he said. "On the other hand, one has conflicts of interest and lack of choice. But the two of them both come from the market."

The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) was openly critical of the KPMG/Ernst & Young deal. Anthea Rose, the ACCA chief executive, said: "This is a disturbing trend. Choice would already be limited by last month's merger proposal. This new development would further restrict the supply of services to four major operators. It is hard to see how this initiative can be justified other than in terms of the commercial

survival of the practices concerned."

It was all so much simpler in the days of the Big Eight. The landscape began to shift in January 1987 when Peat Marwick Mitchell, then number one in the UK league table, merged with Thomson McLintock, trailing at number ten. Four months later the enlarged Peat Marwick International (PMI) duly merged with Klynveld Main Goerdeler (KMG), a Dutch-

This is a disturbing trend. Choice would already be limited by last month's merger proposal

Anthea Rose of ACCA

German firm, to create KPMG Peat Marwick McLintock.

KMG was strong in mainland Europe. PMI's strengths lay in the UK and America. The name was shortened two years ago to KPMG. The exception is the US firm, which

practices as KPMG Peat Marwick LLP. Image consultants have been appointed to find a name for the enlarged KPMG/Ernst & Young. One possibility being flagged is KEY — as in K and EY — but as one insider observed: "We have yet to do the research. For all we know, KEY in Serbo-Croat could mean 'drunken buffoon'."

The pace of change stepped up in 1989 when Touche Ross in the US merged with the US firm of Deloitte Haskins & Sells. In the UK, the two firms held talks, but Deloitte subsequently merged with Coopers & Lybrand. The renamed Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte later dropped Deloitte from the title. Also in 1989, Ernst & Whinney merged with Arthur Young, completing the move from Big Eight to Big Six.

And hence to the Big Four. The big question is what happens to Arthur Andersen, distracted by its own leadership problems, but hugely dominant in many fields nonetheless, and Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, represented in the UK by Deloitte & Touche (formerly Touche Ross). Deloitte would not comment publicly yesterday, but is understood to have held preliminary merger discussions with Ernst & Young (as Andersen did with Price Waterhouse in 1989). It was decided that such a link would not be in the best interests of clients.

Whether Touche can stick to this "independence" line while all around scramble for position remains to be seen.

Intrusive firms upset customers

Hundreds of companies are jeopardising their relationships with customers by bombarding them with unwanted marketing campaigns. Even Marks & Spencer, which prides itself on understanding its customers, has fallen into the trap.

These are the latest findings from the ongoing "mood of the nation" research project by FCB, the advertising agency. In a typical response, one woman said: "I like M&S. I shop there all the time, but if I get one more letter asking me if I want to sign up for their financial services I will boycott them."

Such a reaction may sound extreme, but the public has become weary of companies intruding on their personal lives. Another typical response was this complaint about BT: "I had a phone call from BT at 8pm asking if I wanted to join their friends

Princess of Wales, has played a key role. People feel angry that she was hounded by the paparazzi and it has made them realise that they are in danger of losing control over their lives.

Mr Hartstone says: "These feelings were not inspired by Princess Diana's death, they have been bubbling up for some time. Her death has made people question the morality of someone, be it a photographer or a company, intruding upon their lives."

While this sentiment has clear implications for intrusive marketing techniques such as phone marketing, it may also change the power balance between companies and customers. Customers may decide that business should take a more passive role, allowing them to decide which companies should be allowed access. This may lead to the introduction of information-gathering companies to scour the market place for us.

"Why should customers go to four different manufacturers when they want a new car? If there was an intermediary company it could arrange for a selection of cars to be driven round to the customer's house," Mr Hartstone says.

The method could also be applied to other industries, for example, travel. If you want to go on holiday and do not have time to phone or visit the travel agent, an intermediary company could find the holiday.

This use of middlemen has been useful in the US housing market where buyers give their requirements to a property agent.

But why should people pay for something that they now get free? Since the end of the recession people have become more willing to pay for quality and good service. They also value their spare time more than before.

In the Eighties the buzzword was 24-hour business. But there is a growing backlash against this. People do not want to be hassled in their free time and most rate home life as more important than work. Companies that realise this will be one step ahead of rivals that still think the customer is at their beck and call.



SFO steers racing fraudsters off the road and into prison

Jason Nisse tracks the deals that brought down Landhurst Leasing

Frank Warren, Terry Venables and Bernie Ecclestone may be tempted to shed a tear as Ted Ball and David Ashworth start their sentences for fraud. All three enjoyed well-documented and lucrative relationships with Landhurst Leasing, the finance group run by Ball and Ashworth which crashed five years ago with debts of more than £120 million. But though Arthur Andersen, the receivers appointed to Landhurst, found a whole web of unusual transactions, the frauds which Ball and Ashworth admitted last month were simple cases of being paid backhanders in brown envelopes in order to fiddle the books to keep a troubled engineering company afloat.

Landhurst was founded by Ball in the early 1980s. Its main business was leasing classic and collectable cars such as Ferraris, Aston Martins and Bentleys. By the end of the decade the business had moved into a whole host of other exotic areas. With Frank Warren, the racing promoter, Landhurst became heavily involved in his plans to turn the London Arena into a leading venue for sports events and concerts. Landhurst leased the seats for the arena, leading £1 million to Warren, as well as lending a promotion company run by Warren £115,000 secured on the fixtures and fittings of Warren's execu-



Frank Warren, left, Terry Venables and the London Arena all had links with the troubled Landhurst Leasing



tive box at Arsenal football club. Despite attracting artists as diverse as Pavarotti and Pink Floyd, Warren's dream collapsed and he was forced to, in his own words, "leave Price Waterhouse to help me to run the business". In fact the company owning the London Arena was compulsorily wound up with debts of £30 million. Landhurst's involvement with Terry Venables was even further away from the group's core business. According to his autobiography, the former England football coach borrowed £1.3 million from Landhurst to help his company, Edernote, to purchase its stake in Tottenham Hotspur when

he joined with Alan Sugar to rescue the Premiership football club in 1991. But documents unearthed by Andersen when they took control of Landhurst showed that this money was secured on the assets of three public houses owned by a company called Transcontinental, a company of which Venables had been a director as well as Paul Kirby, a Football Association official. The only trouble was that however hard the accountants looked, they could not find one of the pubs. The Bricklayer's Arms in Cardiff. It appeared it never existed.

The Department of Trade and Industry examined the

dealings of Edernote and passed the file to the Serious Fraud Office, which decided there was not enough evidence to merit further investigation. The DTI is not one to give up that easily and is trying to have Venables disqualified as a director over his role in Edernote.

Though Bernie Ecclestone, who has spent most of this year trying to float his Formula One Holdings on the stock market, had no direct involvement with Landhurst, his decision to sell the Brabham Formula One racing team in 1990 led directly to Ball and Ashworth's downfall. Landhurst had provided finance for Middlebridge Group, an engineering company in

Newport Pagnall, Buckinghamshire, since 1988. Middlebridge, run by Dennis Nursey and Paul McCormack, was tempted into paying £1 million for Brabham and turned to Landhurst for the money. Middlebridge's finances were not particularly healthy prior to the Brabham deal; after it the company never had a chance of turning things round.

Middlebridge had borrowed £7.2 million in total from Landhurst. Most of this was in the form of leases which — if Middlebridge fell behind by more than three months' payments — Ball and Ashworth were supposed to inform Landhurst's syndicate of bank-

ers, led by Guinness Mahon. Instead, Landhurst merely wrote new lease agreements, providing the money to pay off the old ones, and the banks were none the wiser. Meanwhile, Nursey and McCormack were making secret cash payments to Ball and Ashworth, in the form of suitcases and brown envelopes packed with money handed over to the fraudsters at locations such as the Gatwick Airport Hilton and Heathrow service station on the M1.

This merry-go-round continued for two years until, in April 1992, one of the leases could not be refinanced. Ashworth admitted the problem to Guinness Mahon. The bank's syndicate at that point had lent the group £121 million. The merchant bankers asked Arthur Andersen, the accountancy firm, to investigate. It found that Landhurst was a can of worms. Some leases were written on machinery that did not appear to exist, some on machinery not worth the money and some on cars that were no better than rubble. At the same time there was a collapse in the classic car market. Landhurst went into receivership in August 1992 and the SFO started its investigation that October.

Five years on and the SFO is delighted with its result, persuading Ball and Ashworth to plead guilty and securing sentences much longer than the fraud investigators had expected. Ashworth has paid back some of the money that he received, but his family, and the Ball family, still occupy large houses in the stockbroker belts of Sussex and Berkshire. The banks, though, have been left nursing losses of more than £50 million from their involvement with Ball and Ashworth. The bankers are the ones who will be shedding the tears.

Who is Nero?

A MISSIVE arrives from within The Independent, the recently redesigned newspaper partially controlled by David Montgomery's Mirror Group. It seems the staff are getting a little teetichy with Rommel (so called because Monty was on our side), but the message could apply to many organisations.

It quotes Petronius Arbitor, the Roman Governor of Bithynia, who committed suicide in AD 65 after falling foul of Tigellinus, a favourite

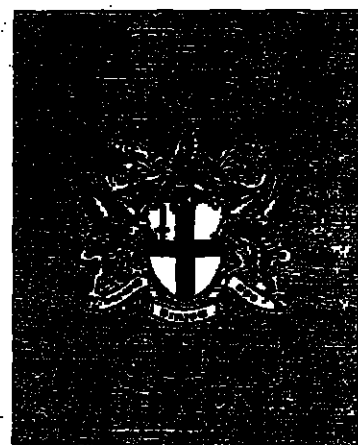
of the Emperor Nero. "We trained hard... but it seemed that every time we were to form up in teams, we would be reorganised. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganising — and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation."

But who, within this scenario, is Tigellinus, and who is Nero?

Name game

ALL this hard work sorting out a merger between Ernst & Young and KPMG and the accountants can't think of a name for the new giant. I'm hoping for a return of the names Peat and Marwick, which seem to have been lost in the mists of time. They also bring back memories of a friend in the City who returned from a meeting once to be delivered a message by his receptionist saying: "Pete called." "Pete who?" he asked. "Pete Smith?" "Pete Jones?" "Peat Marwick," she replied.

ANYONE expecting the gloriously named Istituto Bancario San Paolo di Torino to make a bid for Hambros should not hold their breath. The historic Piedmontese bank has held a 16.6 per cent stake in Hambros for



a decade and two years ago said it was planning to raise its holding to 19 per cent. Unfortunately it has done nothing about buying any extra shares since.

Driverless

TAKEN a reputation battering? Found yourself unloved and put up for adoption by your parent company? Watched your staff morale slowly sink towards the marianne trench? BZW has found the perfect way to perk up its remaining staff: it has paid for the company's logo to adorn the sides of the Docklands Light Railway, which runs down to its new offices at Canary Wharf. Although the money is being passed to Save the Children, the move was

greeted with some sarcasm in one of the pin-striped melées at Bank station this morning. "Perfect," one said. "A driverless train sponsored by a driverless company." Pity BZW's marketing experts were too late for the Titanic.

Stumped

IS THE Shane Warne of spin doctors, Charlie Whelan, spinning out of control? Yesterday amid all the furore about EMU, Whelan's boss, Gordon Brown, seemed less than pleased to be put in the situation of turning on a new Stock Exchange trading system only to witness an immediate market crash. As the Chancellor turned on his heels and jumped in the ministerial car, he left Whelan behind on a freezing pavement, attempting to hail a cab to follow on behind.

THE tenuous connection of the week award goes to Enpar, an engineering company based in Rotherham. It claims credit for Thrust's successful attempt to break both the sound barrier and the land speed record as "Enpar supplied the metal tubing for the jig which manufactured the chassis of the jet-powered car".

Offside

SO Mohamed Al Fayed admitted yesterday that he approached Ken Bates about buying a majority stake

in Chelsea Village, the owner of the Premiership football team, before buying neighbouring Fulham. Is this the same Mohamed Al Fayed who, when spotted earlier this year walking round the Chelsea Village site, was asked about his interest in the company. "I understand Ashraf Marwan (a former business associate of Fayed) is a shareholder in the company," said Mr Fayed's ever-loyal sidekick, Michael Cole, at the time. "Mr Al Fayed would never invest in a company associated with Mr Marwan." Ah, truth is such a rare commodity.

JASON NISSE



Mohamed Al Fayed admits that he considered buying a majority stake in Chelsea Village



I don't know what the letter says — I'm still wading through the partners on the letterhead

If small print's a big problem you should be talking to us.

Corporate • Construction
Intellectual Property
Litigation • Pensions • Property

Rowe & Maw

LAWYERS FOR BUSINESS
20 Black Friars Lane, London EC4V 6HD
Tel: 0171 248 4282

General Accident buys Canadian insurer for £265m

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY

GENERAL ACCIDENT expects annual cost savings of £33 million and a 5 per cent improvement in earnings each year after an agreed purchase of Canadian General Insurance Group for £265 million (£265 million). The savings are expected from 1999 onwards.

Canadian General is the eleventh largest property and casualty insurer in Canada and the move will enhance GA's strategic position in that country.

Philip Twyman, GA group executive director of finance, said the £33 million (£37 million) included an annual saving of £30 million on staff costs. About 600 employees will be made redundant out of a workforce of 2,300. All job losses will be in Canada.

Further cost savings of £10 million will come from combining the office premises of the two businesses; £320 million from combining IT systems; £55 million from reduced reinsurance costs and an additional £10 million from miscellaneous sources.

Mr Twyman said a new management team would be drawn from the best people in both companies. GA said it intended to merge its existing operations in Canada with those of Canadian General as fast as possible, although GA's other interest in Canada, Pilot, the insurance company, would continue to operate separately.

The terms of the acquisition include a goodwill write-off of £340 million, which prompted some analysts to suggest that GA had overpaid. Canadian General is an affiliate of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts.

GA is to acquire the whole of Canadian General's issued share capital for a cash consideration of £265 million. The deal will be financed by cash from GA's existing resources. The deal is conditional on approval from Canadian regulators and is expected to be completed by the end of this year. On a pro forma basis, the group comprising GA, Canadian General and Pilot generated net written premiums of £1.8 billion in 1996, giving it an almost 10 per cent share of the Canadian market.

The company said the acquisition represented a significant move in a fragmented market that had yet to consolidate. Mr Twyman indicated that further deals were likely in the group as a whole.

Bob Scott, chief executive of GA, said: "The acquisition of Canadian General places our Canadian business on a new competitive plane. We are confident that this transaction will sustain market leadership in Canada in our preferred segments, generate considerable cost savings and be value-enhancing for General Accident shareholders."

approval from Canadian regulators and is expected to be completed by the end of this year. On a pro forma basis, the group comprising GA, Canadian General and Pilot generated net written premiums of £1.8 billion in 1996, giving it an almost 10 per cent share of the Canadian market.

The company said the acquisition represented a significant move in a fragmented market that had yet to consolidate. Mr Twyman indicated that further deals were likely in the group as a whole.

Bob Scott, chief executive of GA, said: "The acquisition of Canadian General places our Canadian business on a new competitive plane. We are confident that this transaction will sustain market leadership in Canada in our preferred segments, generate considerable cost savings and be value-enhancing for General Accident shareholders."

approval from Canadian regulators and is expected to be completed by the end of this year. On a pro forma basis, the group comprising GA, Canadian General and Pilot generated net written premiums of £1.8 billion in 1996, giving it an almost 10 per cent share of the Canadian market.

The company said the acquisition represented a significant move in a fragmented market that had yet to consolidate. Mr Twyman indicated that further deals were likely in the group as a whole.

Bob Scott, chief executive of GA, said: "The acquisition of Canadian General places our Canadian business on a new competitive plane. We are confident that this transaction will sustain market leadership in Canada in our preferred segments, generate considerable cost savings and be value-enhancing for General Accident shareholders."

Harvey Nash maiden half-year sales up 45%



David Treacher, front right, joint managing director of Harvey Nash, with Ian Furniss, left, David Higgins and Tom Crawford, after the education and business training company

reported maiden interim figures up 36 per cent to £2.4 million, on sales up 45 per cent to £23.8 million. The shares fell from 287p to 273½p.

Earnings are up 37 per cent to 6.06p,

out of which an interim dividend of 1.55p will be paid, 16 per cent above the figure in the April flotation prospectus. Mr Treacher said: "The market in which we operate is set to remain strong."

Product rethink by Seton

By PAUL DURMAN

SETON Healthcare, the over-the-counter medicines company, has weeded out its less profitable product lines after its recent £21.7 million acquisition of ThackrayCare.

The group-wide rationalisation contributed £800,000 to an exceptional charge of £2.6 million that cut Seton's half-year, pre-tax profits to £6.7 million (£7.9 million). Excluding one-offs, pre-tax profits rose 18 per cent. Operating profits increased 21 per cent to £11.5 million.

Iain Cater, Seton's chief executive, said £1.8 million of the exceptional charge reflected the costs of 40 redundancies at ThackrayCare and paying off the bulk discount terms previously enjoyed by the acquired firm's wholesalers.

Like-for-like sales fell 4 per cent. However, Seton said product sales in the market place continued to grow at 8 to 12 per cent. Sales in the six months to August 31 rose 8 per cent to £53.3 million, although the increase was almost entirely down to the inclusion of ThackrayCare from June.

An interim dividend of 3p (2.7p) will be paid on January 30.

National Power puts £162m into Turkey

NATIONAL POWER, the UK's biggest generator, is to put £162 million into three Turkish power plants, taking its overseas investment to nearly £1.2 billion. It has been growing its international business over the past five years as more independent power projects begin operating around the world. When the Turkish stations begin feeding into National Power's income next year, contributions from overseas operations will reach 20 per cent of revenue.

The deals announced yesterday will give National Power two 42.5 per cent stakes in lignite-fired stations, along with attached lignite mines, and a 45 per cent stake in a gas-fired station. Keith Henry, chief executive, said the Turkish deals would "enable us to consolidate our operations in Turkey, and to build a long-term business in a country with one of Europe's fastest-growing electricity demands".

Dean Corp share issue

DEAN CORP said it is to raise £2.4 million net of expenses through the issue of 13.9 million new ordinary shares at 13.5p a share. Dean Corp said existing shareholders would be offered three shares for every ten shares held. The shares remained unchanged at 15p. The company also said it received subscriptions for 7.2 million shares from Future Match Ltd, which is 80 per cent owned by First Shanghai Investments. Dean said that it intends to explore with First Shanghai opportunities for future collaboration.

Wace's £3.9m disposal

WACE has sold the trade and assets of its Conical Containers business to Polarcup, the UK packaging unit of Finland's Huhtamäki, for £3.9 million. The transaction completes the disposal programme of the non-core element of the former Ferry Pickering Group acquired by Wace in December 1995. Wace said that the net proceeds of the disposal would be used to reduce the borrowings of the group. Conical Containers makes cardboard tubs with injection-moulded plastic lids for the food-packaging market.

R-R helicopter order

ROLLS-ROYCE has won a \$189 million (£116 million) contract to supply engines for US Army helicopters through its Allison subsidiary. The five-year contract is to supply up to 600 model 250 engines for new and refurbished Kiowa Warrior helicopters, a two-man craft used in support of US troops in the Middle East and, most recently, in US Army operations in Bosnia. Delivery of the engines from Allison, which is based in the US and was acquired by Rolls-Royce in 1995, will begin in the first quarter of 1998.

Upton moves ahead

UPTON & SOUTHERN, the retail group, raised pre-tax profits from £243,000 to £423,000 in the year to July 26, on sales up 32 per cent to £11.8 million. Earnings per share increased from 0.14p to 0.20p. The board said that it had carefully considered whether the company should now pay a dividend on the ordinary shares, but had concluded that the funds available would be better used for capital investment. New stores were opened in Newcastle upon Tyne and Hartlepool during the year.

Shell Chinese venture

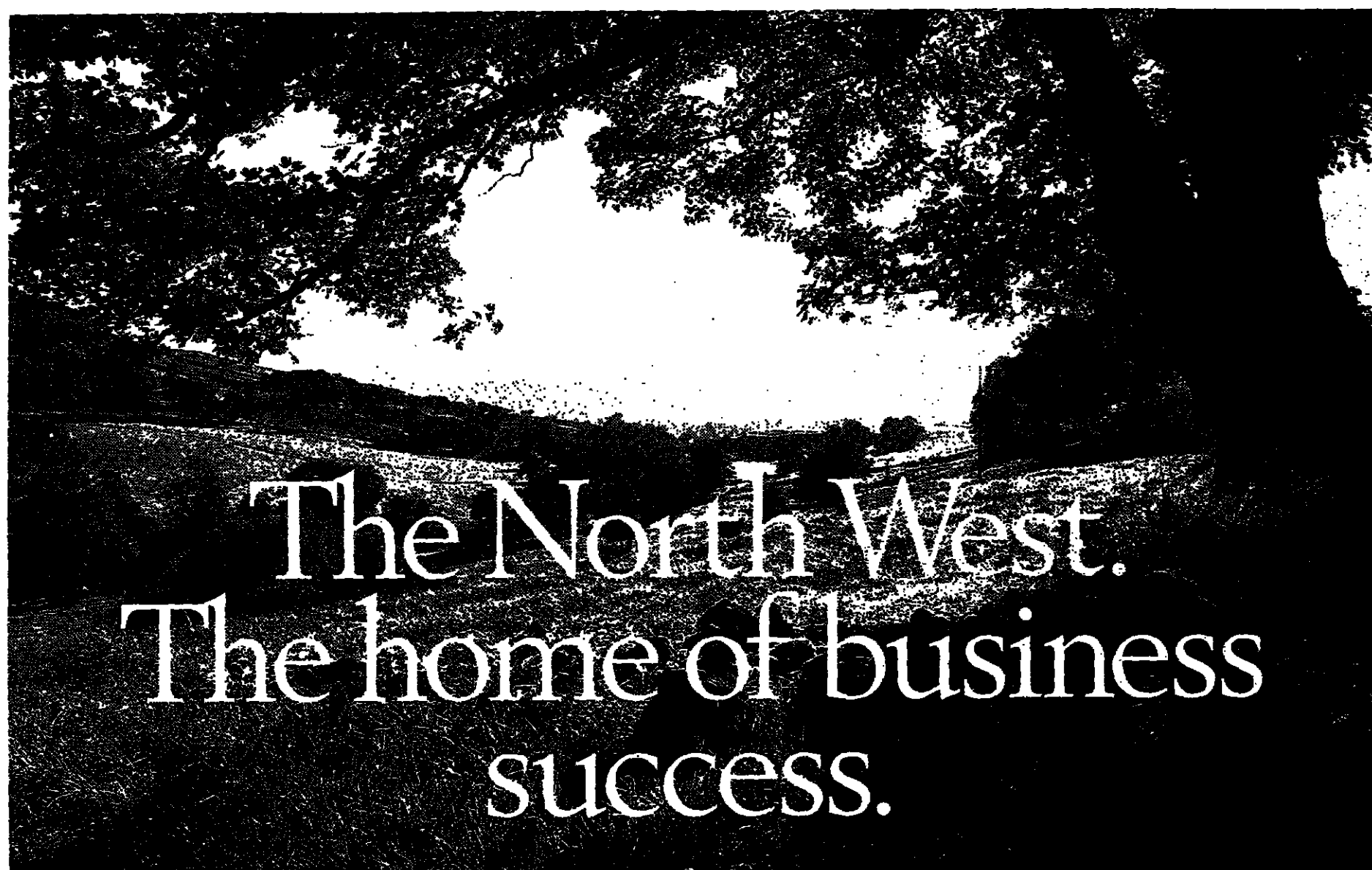
SHELL International Chemicals has signed a joint venture agreement with Jinling Petrochemical Corporation in China. The joint venture, to be known as Jinling Shell Petrochemical company, will be incorporated in China and will be 60 per cent owned by Shell companies and 40 per cent by Jinling. Jinling will contribute its expandable polystyrene plant, which was built in 1991 under a Shell licence. Shell said that the joint venture would modernise the plant and expand capacity by 2000.

Vote on dock pay offer

DOCKERS involved in a two-year dispute after being sacked for refusing to cross a picket line, yesterday backed a decision to vote on a final offer. But leaders of the 329 Liverpool dockers are recommending rejection of the offer from the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company of £28,000 per person and the promise of 40 jobs. The weekend decision by the leadership of the Transport and General Workers' Union to hold a ballot by tomorrow was endorsed at a mass meeting of the dockers yesterday.

Foster's in Vietnam deal

FOSTER'S BREWING, of Australia, has expanded into Vietnam, buying two local breweries in one of the world's fastest-growing beer markets for A\$78 million (£35 million). The deal completes the first stage of an Asian foray that began with ventures in China and India. John Ralph, chairman of Foster's, told shareholders at the company's annual meeting in Melbourne that the breweries would give Foster's six per cent of the Vietnamese beer market.



The North West.
The home of business success.

Here in the heart of some of the most natural panoramas in the UK you will find a mature, dynamic regional economy, with a wide range of manufacturing companies, some of them world leaders, and a thriving service sector, from financial services to the leisure industry.

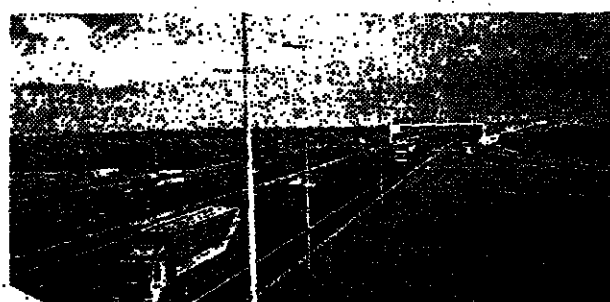
CNT, England's largest owner of development land, has many prime greenfield sites close to the M6, M62 and the key towns of Preston, Warrington, Runcorn and Skelmersdale. All ready for fast-track, no-hassle development.

A major element in the North West's business success is its outstanding strategic location, offering rapid access to markets and suppliers in the UK and Europe.

The quality of life is equally outstanding, with the Lake District, the Peak District and Snowdonia near by; excellent sports, leisure, cultural and shopping facilities; and attractive housing at highly competitive prices.

Talk to CNT. We're ready to help you find business success here in the North West.

PRESTON
SKELMERSDALE
WARRINGTON
RUNCORN



With easy access to international sea and airports, and rapid rail and motorway links to the rest of the UK, the North West has one of Europe's best communications networks.



The North West is one of Europe's most important centres for 'new century' industries, from IT and electronics to aerospace and bio-technology. All the ingredients needed for success are here.



The range of leisure activities, excellent shopping facilities and beautiful environment give a high quality of life.



The region has a strong academic tradition with excellent schools, universities, research facilities. The young workforce has an ambitious, adventurous outlook.

LOCATIONS MADE FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS.

CNT SELLS LAND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS PREMISES IN KEY LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT ENGLAND.
ASK ABOUT: ♦ DEVELOPMENT SITES. ♦ FAST-TRACK PLANNING. ♦ CONFIDENTIAL AND COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE.

CALL 01925 651144 FOR DETAILS.

e-mail: north@cnt.org.uk Internet: http://www.cnt.org.uk



THE TIMES TUESDAY OCTOBER 21 1997

Big. bold

G

W

THE TIMES

Frank Gehry's sensational new Guggenheim Museum is one of the century's supreme buildings, says Richard Cork

Big, bold and brilliant in Bilbao

Glimpsed at the end of a street leading to the waterfront, the new Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao looks at once shimmering and convulsive. It erupts from the river's edge with astounding force, and yet the titanium-clad surfaces gleam seductively in the Spanish sun.

Frank Gehry, the California-based architect of this revelatory building, manipulates writhing forms at their most restless. They explode outwards, and flow along the embankment like unstoppable white lava. But just as they threaten to envelop the nearby bridge, their undulations are held as if in a freeze-frame. Each glittering component is arrested at the peak of its volcanic energy.

As a result the museum, opened at the weekend, provides run-down Bilbao with even more of a landmark monument than its commissioners, the Basque Government, can ever have dared to hope. The centrepiece of the city's ambitious \$1.5 billion redevelopment, which includes a coolly refined Norman Foster Underground system and an elegant footbridge by Santiago Calatrava, this swaggering tour de force deserves to be ranked among the supreme buildings of the 20th century. Anyone who cares about architecture must visit it forthwith.

Viewed from the river, the building seems to relax and expand, unfurling like a sequence of overlapping waves or fish thrashing their ecstatic tails against the sky. Metaphors proliferate in the mind, ensuring that Gehry's imagery thwarts any single interpretation. We notice the dialogue he sets up between materials, juxtaposing the reflective lightness of titanium with limestone's warmer solidity and the bristling linear intricacy of ribbed windows.

We realise, too, how courageously he has made his building a part of the urban fabric. Far from avoiding the vehicular bridge, an undistinguished postwar structure, Gehry embraces it. One twisted titanium curve halts just above the road, hanging there with exclamatory drama to startle the motorists below.

What's more, the museum's longest gallery stretches under the bridge, terminating on the other side. There, as a final flourish, Gehry has erected a splintered structure in metal and stone. Shamelessly unfunctional, it looks more like a freestanding sculpture than a part of the building.

The architect has always been proud of his friendships with artists. They have nourished his work for decades, helping him to approach architecture with the expressive freedom he seeks. The Guggenheim in Bilbao is far and away his most flamboyant attempt to put this unfettered approach into action on the grandest scale imaginable. But as I traversed its shell and marvelled at Gehry's ceaselessly inventive panache, ques-



Inside the museum, narrow walkways twist and soar

tions about the interior multiplied in my head. Would it be nothing more than an ebullient display of architectural high spirits, ignoring the exhibits it was supposed to enhance?

There is nothing remotely reticent about the titanic atrium confronting everyone soon after they enter. It surges a vertiginous 16ft, more than double the height of Frank Lloyd Wright's spiralling rotunda in the New York Guggenheim. And as if its vaulted ceiling that nobody remains unaffected by its giddiness, Gehry alternates between billowing white plaster and angular girders, and challenges purged simplicity with wilful complication.

Narrow serpentine walkways are suspended in space, daring us to negotiate them without reeling. And as we clamber higher on Piranesian staircases, severity is continually interrupted by Baroque elaboration.

I found myself looking downwards, sideways and upwards, in a 'hydra-headed' attempt to absorb everything. I relished Gehry's determination to provide, time and again, views of sky, river and city. And, conversely, I was ambushed by his willingness to let some of the titanium cladding burst in from outside, warning us that he is prepared to flout architectural civilities at every turn.

At a press conference Gehry declared that 'I've spent much of my life talking to artists about what a museum should be'. His conclusion was unexpected, flouting conventional wisdom by stressing that 'artists are tired of being in a neutral building — they want to be in an important place'. To my relief, though, what Gehry described as his 'give it hell' approach to architecture

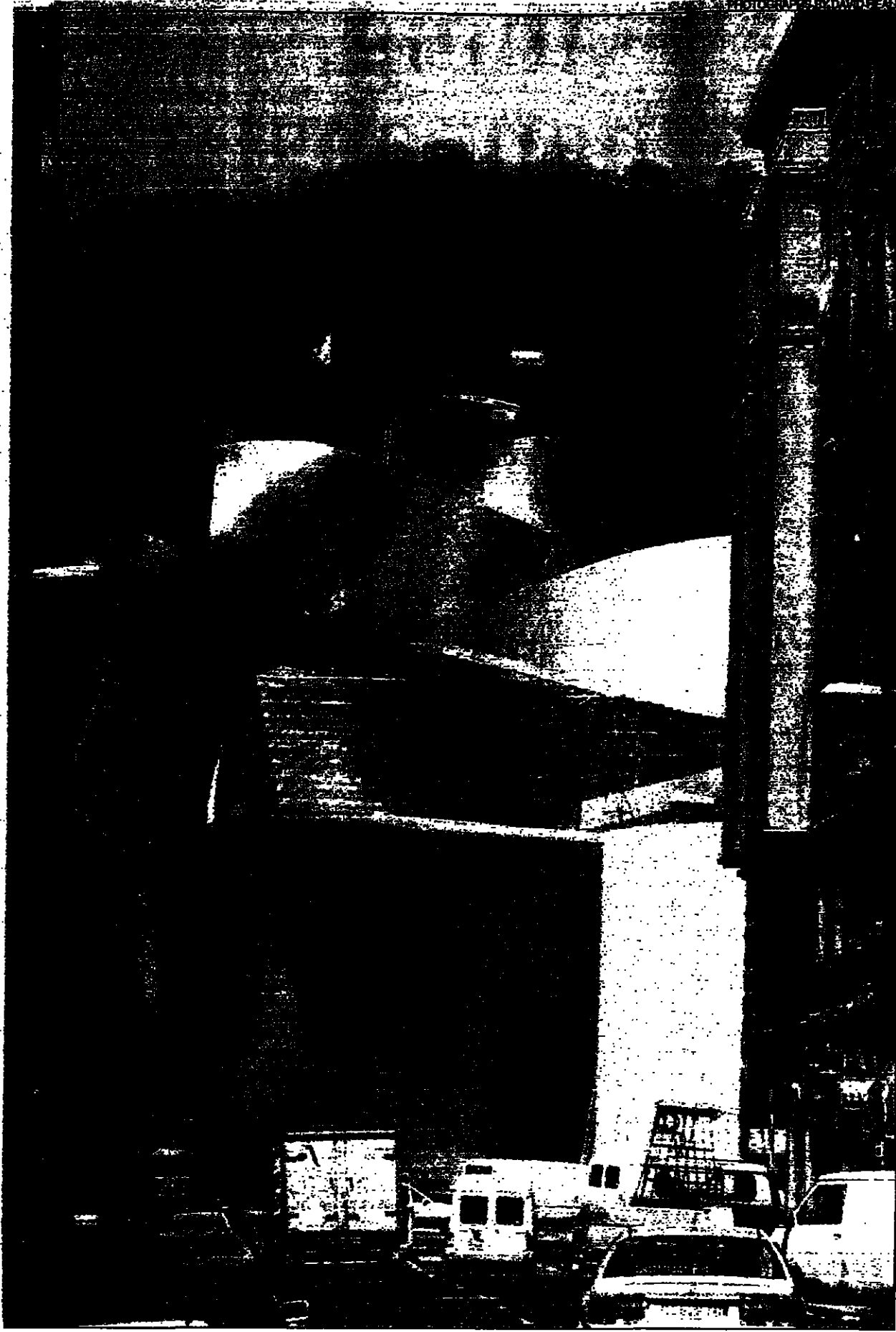
is countered by an innate respect for the needs of the artwork itself. Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, who collaborated with Gehry on a Californian office incorporating a giant pair of binoculars, have been given a place of honour for their *Soft Shuttlecock*. Expanded to a monstrous size and filled with canvas-covered foam, it is transformed into a collapsing sci-fi insect beached on a platform high in the atrium. It is a colossal intrusion, and yet Gehry seems to welcome it in the heart of his building.

For all its idiosyncratic bravura, this architecture is generous to the art housed here. Nothing could be more overwhelming than Richard Serra's *Snake*, one of the specially commissioned works. Its three undulating expanses of steel wriggle through the largest gallery, inviting us to walk inside like travellers exploring a dark, narrow canyon.

The boat-shaped room enclosing *Snake* is 450ft in length, so the sculpture cannot dominate its surroundings. Many of the exhibits beyond, though, suffer from the immensity of the space. Big minimalist pieces by Carl André and Don Judd look diminished, and even the billboard-size paintings by Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist and Warhol are dwarfed on the 80ft-high walls.

If Gehry had his way, this gargantuan gallery would be split up. But Thomas Krens, director of the Guggenheim Foundation and mastermind of the Bilbao venture, insisted that it remain undivided. In this respect, Krens was wrong. But he deserves credit for backing Gehry's \$100 million building and pushing it through to triumphant completion.

Krens will control the exhibition programme, feeding it with many of the best 20th-century works from the New York collection. The Guggenheim's role here has been the butt of some sniping articles, deploring its growing influence across Europe. Without doubt, the Basques should make sure that they take command. But however many charges of cultural colonialism may be bandied about, the truth is that the Guggenheim has provided Bilbao with a miraculous showcase.



The stunning view of the new Guggenheim, "shimmering and convulsive", glimpsed through the streets of Bilbao

Both Gehry and Krens were clearly aware of the need to accommodate art with diverse requirements. So far every full-blown operatic space inside there are also more sober galleries for older exhibits. One small round chamber proves ideal for drawings and watercolours by Giacometti, Gorky and Ellsworth Kelly. And the rooms containing the Guggenheim's historic Modernist collection, from Picasso's Cubism to the Abstract Expressionists and beyond, could scarcely be more well-behaved.

The failures in the opening exhibition are curatorial rather than architectural, and can easily be remedied. Jim Dine's garish trio of crude Spanish Venuses do not deserve prominence, blocking a spectacular window behind them. And the gallery beyond is marred by the indigestible variety of work installed there. But these mistakes can be rectified, and the successful rooms easily outnumber them. For this is an inspirational museum, inside and out. Surging, swooping and soaring, Gehry's pyrotechnic display

shows just how pedestrian most other modern architecture has become.

● The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (0034-4-423-2799/9000) is open Sun 11am-3pm, Tues-Wed 11am-5pm, Thurs-Sat 11am-9pm, closed Mon

shows just how pedestrian most other modern architecture has become.

● The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (0034-4-423-2799/9000) is open Sun 11am-3pm, Tues-Wed 11am-5pm, Thurs-Sat 11am-9pm, closed Mon

shows just how pedestrian most other modern architecture has become.

● The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (0034-4-423-2799/9000) is open Sun 11am-3pm, Tues-Wed 11am-5pm, Thurs-Sat 11am-9pm, closed Mon

LONDON EXHIBITIONS

IS THE experience of Keith Coventry's painting and sculpture meant to outlive the simple circular point he makes? It is difficult to know. The left-over detritus of certain social housing and landscaping policies are represented by art objects: bronze casts of broken saplings strangled in early adolescence by vandals stand transformed in value and significance on the gallery floor.

Looted Shop Front 1997, the cast of a real shop window with broken glass, looks like a plastic Magritte painting as it leans against the wall, a frame within a frame. Replicas of two heads by Henry Moore, also broken off in real life, lie on the floor while the familiar, apparently abstract, trinity of free-standing upright, metal-work is the bare structure left after a park bench has been destroyed.

The Showroom, 44 Bonner Road, London E2 (0181-983 4115) until Nov 16

□ Daniel Coombs has changed his work dramatically, moving from early spatial figurative narration to huge, apparently simple paintings. Each of the three paintings taking up the gallery at *The Approach* appears to be an immediate symbol or icon, a straightforward representation. *House*, a rendition more basic than a child could manage, uses white outline stamped against a blue background; *Fire* has red paint seeping into a salt-encrusted canvas surface to give the sense of a familiar and overextended template sprayed against an outside wall.

Coombs must wonder how far this pull between physical effect and suggested symbol can go. Time spent on asking very basic questions — "what does the painter hope to say?" or "am I missing something?" — allows an element of disquiet and distrust to creep in.

The Approach, 1st Floor, 47 Approach Road, London E2 (0181-983 3578) until Nov 9

□ A GENERALLY nonchalant mixed show of work by six artists, Gonzo is situated around the backyard of a deserted police station in Bethnal Green. The highlights include Tomoko Takahashi's excellent arrangement, which makes use of the place and its past with a mass of abandoned police equipment strewn through a warren of rooms. Upside-down drawers, gloves and coat-hangers look as if they themselves have been disturbed in the act. Upstairs, across the yard, Brian Cyril Griffiths has assembled two free-standing boyish models of semi-scientific instruments from simple found material.

Old Bethnal Green Police Station, 458 Bethnal Green Road, London E2 (0171-739 7228) until Nov 1

SACHA CRADDOCK

POP: Guitar men hit the spot; militants made good get back to basics

Unplugged and electrifying

An evening of inspiring craftsmanship at the Queen Elizabeth Hall was admirably set in train by Joseph Arthur, one of the year's most original recording freshmen. Arthur, now to album-making at the age of 26, played songs from his debut offering on the Real World label, *Big City Streets*, with the impudent air of a court entertainer whipping up a one-man storm with an extraordinary "live sampling" technique on his acoustic guitar. A name to note.

Being in on the Ron Sexsmith secret produces the contrasting thoughts of any clandestine pleasure: you

want to keep it for yourself yet tell the world how great it is. The Canadian proved himself an instant original on his self-titled debut record for Interscope in 1995, unveiling a flower garden of rare musical blooms, tended by a voice to cry for. The blossoms were just as delicate this summer on *Other Songs*, an album that confirmed Sexsmith as a songwriter of painful poignancy.

Now to witness those songs flourishing in this intimate environment was a true treat.

With his Beatle mop-top, baby face and stumbling patter, Sexsmith is an endearingly reluctant and unlikely frontman. His acoustic guitar accompanied only by drums, bass and occasional accordion, he presented little to watch but was never remotely dull, as 90 minutes flew by on the strength of some evocative lyrics and indelible melodies.

From the previous album, songs such as *Lebanon*, *Tennessee* and *Secret Heart* sat comfortably with new pieces that underline his unfailing ability to hitch a comely tune to a lyric of unswerving directness, as in *Pretty Little Cemetery* and *Child Star* ("They

only wanted you when you were good as gold... go back to the real world while you're still young").

Sexsmith's writing is replete with simple profundity, as in *April After All*, in which he steers a relationship off the rocks with the calm observation: "Tears are bound to fall, it's April after all."

A cover of *Everyday I Write The Book*, written by one of his celebrity supporters, Elvis Costello, was like a warm beam of light, and he closed with a delightful version of his countryman Gordon Lightfoot's mighty *Sundown*.

PAUL SEXTON

Rockers for the dockers

The bulk of Chumbawamba's new "pop" songs, however, were a disappointment played live. Tame and top-heavy, they were too jaunty and up-tempo to suit the band's powerful sound. Only when the melody was weighted down with rock guitars and a deep bass as on *Tubthumper*, which closed the set, was the audience suitably roused and ready to fight.

Live, Chumbawamba is a hard act to pin down. The band's musical philosophy is to explore vastly different styles on each of its albums: in the late 1980s it followed a hardcore punk record with a collection of a cappella folk songs, while *Tubthumper*

has melodic pop at its core. This 45-minute set saw the band skip from ska and dancehall to throbbing techno to its trademark shouty, drum-driven calls to arms, taking in soul, rock and jazz influences en route and even finding time to dedicate a traditional Irish reel to Anti-Fascist Action. There were common factors too, though — a glorious if overused brass section; sharply contrasted male-versus-female vocals.

The bulk of Chumbawamba's new "pop" songs, however, were a disappointment played live. Tame and top-heavy, they were too jaunty and up-tempo to suit the band's powerful sound. Only when the melody was weighted down with rock guitars and a deep bass as on *Tubthumper*, which closed the set, was the audience suitably roused and ready to fight.

LISA VERRICO

"THE PERFECT WEST END PLAY"

DEPENDENT ON BLACK

NOW SUNDAYS 8.30PM

THE PERFECT WEST END PLAY

DONMAR WAREHOUSE

By SOPHOCLES

Produced by FRANK MCGUINNESS

Plus this summer with DANIEL WILSON

DAVID LEVINSKY

20th ANNIVERSARY

ON ELECTRA

FROM TONIGHT UNTIL 6 DEC ONLY

BOX OFFICE: 0171 369 1732

"A TRIUMPH"

"STUNNING"

THE TIMES

THE SUCCESS STORY OF THE NINETIES

CAN YOU ALWAYS GET YOUR COPY?

Dear Newspaper, please deliver/save me a copy of THE TIMES

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Trainspotters get sentimental

Carol Allen
finds out what
led the
three-man cult
movie team to
make a romantic
comedy

Admirers of *Trainspotting* and *Shallow Grave* are in for a shock this week when the latest film by the "gang of three", Danny Boyle, Andrew Macdonald and John Hodge, opens simultaneously here and in America. Unlike its predecessors, *A Life Less Ordinary* is a romantic comedy, and therefore something completely different. Or is it?

It's a romance and it is funny but it has dramatic elements as well, says Hodge, the writer of the team. "Just as *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting* mix up a few genres, in that one is basically a thriller and one is a buddy movie but with other elements, this does the same, so that hopefully it has a feeling of being something new and original. After the first two, which are both quite dark and morbid films, we wanted to do something that was more optimistic and wasn't afraid to show some honest sentiment. I think it would have been a terrible mistake to try to make *Trainspotting 2* or *Shallow Grave 2*. There's no point in repeating something you've already done."

While Macdonald, the producer, admits there is a danger of alienating fans of the previous two films, he argues, a risk that had to be taken. "We couldn't have stayed in the same vein as *Trainspotting*. We had to try something different. Otherwise people would have been incredibly disappointed."

A Life Less Ordinary does have elements in common with the team's previous films — the same quirky, darkly surreal humour, and a strong element of free-wheeling fantasy, which can turn a karaoke sequence into an affectionate pastiche of the Hollywood musical, and incorporate two angels sent with orders, to ensure that the young couple (Ewan McGregor and Cameron Diaz) fall in love. There is also a totally contemporary feel to the central relationship, in that the dominant partner is the woman, and a total absence of sentimentality in a genre which frequently suffers from a great streak of sugar at its centre.

"We try to avoid that," says Hodge. "No sugar, no saccharine, no artificial sweeteners. It doesn't mean you can't have emotion in the film. I think that because it's got a hard edge the emotion is actually more believable."

"The film is very optimistic," Macdonald adds. "It's a fantasy, but it has a feeling of truth about it which some people might say is cynical. We don't want to be mushy and sentimental."

All three confess, however, to being believers in the film's romantic premise. "Of two people who are meant for each other from the moment their eyes meet, Hodge, now 33, married earlier this year, Macdonald, 31, followed suit only a few weeks ago, and both count themselves true romantics. Boyle, the director, who is now 40, is a little more cautious. "I do believe in true love but I'm a bit older so I try not to talk about it too much."

"Another element the film has in common with the trio's previous work is Boyle's strikingly cinematic visual style, which looks as though every shot has been carefully crafted and storyboarded in the method of film makers such as Brian de Palma. In reality Boyle and his director of photography, Brian Yano, work very spontaneously and "on the hoof", often shooting only one take. For this film, their first outside Scotland, they had a much bigger canvas to paint on — the wide open spaces of Utah.

"It's a great place to tell a story," Boyle enthuses. "There's a visual vocabulary that people accept about America. You can move effortlessly through a cut from one kind of landscape, like a city, to a huge wilderness, and you accept that they are next door to each other. That's very helpful and useful in this story. What we wanted to do was a film that's a product of both cultures. People here



Communing with the angels: (from left) producer Andrew Macdonald, director Danny Boyle and writer John Hodge get up on the roof to contemplate *A Life Less Ordinary*

might see it as a British movie set in America, people in America can take it as one of their own."

There are sound commercial as well as creative reasons for setting the story in America. "American actors are what the world wants to see, like it or hate it, even non-famous American actors, just because the popular vocabulary of film has been created by and set in America," Macdonald says. "Many Europeans have worked there and lots of nationalities have helped to create it, but it was American studios that put it all over the world."

Of the three Macdonald is the only one who can be said to have film in his blood. Hodge was a doctor when he and Macdonald first met at the Edinburgh Film Festival and had the conversation which led to *Shallow Grave*. Boyle,

whose first film that was, had worked in theatre with Joint Stock, the Royal Court and the RSC before moving to television. Macdonald started in the film business in the mid Eighties, working as assistant director and location manager before forming his own company. He is also the grandson of Emeric Pressburger, who with Michael Powell formed a legendary creative team. And although in theory the trio have their separate roles, when talking about their work they constantly use the first person plural.

"Because we work together we share some of the problems

and solutions," explains Macdonald. "Ultimately of course somebody has to write and somebody has to direct, and somebody has to make the deals with the distributor and decide how much everybody's getting paid and when we're opening the film. But we just try to talk about it with each other, which believe me does not happen very often with other film-makers."

Because *Shallow Grave* was finished more than a year before its release in 1995, by which time Hodge had started writing *A Life Less Ordinary* and work on *Trainspotting* was well under way, the team

appear to have been extraordinarily productive. They are currently developing what they describe as a "portmanteau film", *Alien Love Triangle*, three short stories about human/alien loving relationships. Meanwhile, Hodge is about to start work on the screenplay of Alex Garland's novel *The Beach*, a project brought to the table by Boyle. But as Macdonald points out, you need a minimum of two years to develop a script, film it and get it to the screen, so fans of the "gang of three" will have a while to wait.

● *A Life Less Ordinary* opens on Friday

companion piece to *The Unanswered Question*, follow on directly, maintaining the mood of introspection. Both pieces were executed meticulously, the complex rhythms of the second benefiting from Elizabeth Schube's attentions as associate conductor.

Joseph Schwantner's Percussion Concerto leaves two dominant impressions: an exotic array of percussion, including a tam-tam lowered into a large vessel of water, and an irrepressible emission of energy. So abandoned was Evelyn Glennie's performance that her sticks gradually disintegrated in her final, frenzied cadenza. Continuing in an unbroken flow, first with hands alone and then with a miraculously appearing second, sturdier pair of sticks, she and the orchestra brought this high-octane performance to a resounding close.

Much as one admires Schwantner's control of a head of steam, it was good to return to the traditional values of melodic and harmonic development in Aaron Copland's Symphony No. 3. With its characteristically expansive idiom and its working out of the familiar *Fanfare for the Common Man* material, this is a piece that could be done far more often in this country than it is.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Off to a good start

CHARLES IVES'S *The Unanswered Question* begins — when it is done properly — with muted strings sustaining an ethereal chord offstage. There is no more evocative opening to be heard in the repertoire, except perhaps for the strains of the *Parsifal* Prelude waiting up from the "mystic abyss" at Bayreuth.

It was an inspired way for Leonard Slatkin and his National Symphony Orchestra of Washington to open their concert, the first in the London International Orchestral Season. It was interesting, too, to hear *Central Park in the Dark*, conceived by Ives as a

CONCERT

Washington
180/Slatkin
Festival Hall

concert piece to *The Unanswered Question*, follow on directly, maintaining the mood of introspection. Both pieces were executed meticulously, the complex rhythms of the second benefiting from Elizabeth Schube's attentions as associate conductor.

Joseph Schwantner's Percussion Concerto leaves two dominant impressions: an exotic array of percussion, including a tam-tam lowered into a large vessel of water, and an irrepressible emission of energy. So abandoned was Evelyn Glennie's performance that her sticks gradually disintegrated in her final, frenzied cadenza. Continuing in an unbroken flow, first with hands alone and then with a miraculously appearing second, sturdier pair of sticks, she and the orchestra brought this high-octane performance to a resounding close.

Much as one admires Schwantner's control of a head of steam, it was good to return to the traditional values of melodic and harmonic development in Aaron Copland's Symphony No. 3. With its characteristically expansive idiom and its working out of the familiar *Fanfare for the Common Man* material, this is a piece that could be done far more often in this country than it is.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Reich's airship in need of more lift

IT IS not the first time a composer has failed to finish a commission. But Steve Reich has made a habit of presenting works that stop in their tracks. *Proverb*, heard in full on Sunday, began life as a half-finished Proms commission. Then we should have heard Act I of his new documentary video opera, *Three Tales "Hindenburg"*. In fact, we heard only the first two scenes.

It says a lot about the nature of Reich's music that he was happy to bring just 14 out of 50 proposed minutes to Europe. He has said that he approached this work "as a composer would, wanting to get in his material and — outta my way". So how much was the "composer" Reich in charge, as opposed to the technician meshing video, speech, computer tracks and live parts together, and what was in the way?

The ultimate aim of the opera is to engage in a debate about the growth and implications of technology in this century. This part dealt with Paul von Hindenburg, last President of the Weimar Republic and the man whose name was on the airship that crashed at New York in 1937, a Nazi swastika on its tail.

It is a richly Reichian concoction, full of mythic possibility. Beryl Korot's well-crafted video enabled us to see dramatic footage and Reich, for whom documentary speech is as much a part of his inspiration and texture as folk song was to Bartok, has involved voices — but doesn't take his

NEW MUSIC

cue from them. He has tried to avoid the start-stop quality which the voices imposed on *The Cave*. Yet much of the fresh impetus of Reich's music comes from speech patterns when the music itself leads, it needs character.

Some I succeeds, with three tenors singing in "canon" the bombastic words of the German Ambassador. "It could not have been a technical matter". As the key changes, notes lengthen, the video slows and a reporter's voice is stretched under the singing into an eerie whine, giving the statement a pleading quality.

In the second part, however, when armies march by and contemporary commentators flash on screen, the thin chords are overwhelmed by the messages hurled across the screen. There is also a sense that we are being lectured; this isn't documentary opera, it's practically *Panorama*. *Three Tales* will need some stronger musical material to build up a focused momentum, as Reich did so brilliantly in works like *Music for 18 Musicians*, which was given a breezy performance here by Bradley Lubman and the Ensemble Modern.

HELEN WALLACE

A guide to the best available recordings, presented in conjunction with Radio 3

■ OFFENBACH OPERETTAS

Reviewed by Patrick O'Connor

ROSSINI called Offenbach "the Mozart of the Champs-Élysées", and the task facing recording artists is to find a balance between the typically Parisian musical-theatre style and enough opera to do justice to the music.

Michel Plasson with the Toulouse Capitole Orchestra has recorded the five most celebrated full-length operettas composed by Offenbach in his years of unchallenged success as the leading Boulevard composer. *Orphée aux enfers* (EMI CD57 49647 2) benefits from Michel Stenhal in the title role, with Mady Neplee as Euridice. This is the only complete recording available in French; but on EMI's budget Belle Époque series there is a two-CD set of highlights recorded in the 1950s, conducted by Jules Gressier, in which *Orphée* is heard alongside extracts from *La Belle Héloïse* and *La Vie Parisienne*. The singing actors are the sort of players who moved naturally from the Opera Comique to the Boulevard theatres, and they seem to have the style absolutely right (EMI CD57 61515 2, £9.99).

Of the other Plasson sets *La Belle Héloïse* is perhaps the most successful, with a surprisingly idiomatic performance from Jesse Norman in the title role (EMI OOST 47157 8). *La Vie Parisienne* (EMI CD57 477154 8) is Offenbach's most infectious and tuneful score. Plasson's version is marred by an echo-laden acoustic. A import on Musicdisc (MU 650, distributed by Discovery Records) ensures the 1959 production

with Jean-Louis Barrault and Madeleine Renaud. *La Grande Duchesse de Grolstein* (Sony SM2K 62883) has Régine Crespin in formidable guise as the marauding Duchess. This Plasson recording is preferable in every way to a noisy "live version" with Lucia Valentini-Terrani (Dynamik). Plasson's recording of *La Périchole* with Teresa Berganza and Jose Carreras is a fine achievement, but is just upstaged by an older one on Erato, conducted by Alain Lombard, with Crespin, Alain Vanzo and Jules Bastin (Erato 2292 45686 2, £19.99) which, though short of dialogue, comes nearest to the ideal Offenbach feel.

There are several rarities available, of which Mamel Rosenthal's triple bill *Vive Offenbach* (EMI CD57 49361 2), comprising *Pomme d'Api*, *Monsieur Choufleuri* and *Mesdames de la Halle*, is a fascinating glimpse of Offenbach's unknown body of work. A medium price anthology, *The World of Offenbach* (Decca 452 942 2), includes many fine modern performances, among them Joan Sutherland's glittering waltz-song from *Robinson Crusoe*. Of the many orchestral discs available, *Offenbach Overtures and Ballets* conducted by the late Antonio de Almeida is a rich selection of little-known pieces (Phillips 422 057 2).

● To order the recommended recording, with free delivery, please send a cheque payable to The Times Music Shop to FREEPOST, SCO681, Forbes, IV36 0BR or phone 0345 023 496; e-mail: music@the-times.co.uk
● Next Saturday, Radio 3 (9am): Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No 7

AN EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER THE TIMES

FREE skating and 50% off skiing and climbing

Feeling fit and ready to try something new and exciting? More and more British people go skiing every year. Why not join them and start training? Stop dreaming about climbing mountains and go for it. Or try your feet at skating — it's invigorating, fun and FREE. All you need is four differently numbered tokens from The Times this week for each activity.

● In the *Adrenaline Rush* supplement, free with yesterday's paper, the normal cost of a Mithril Racing one-day activity (page 14) should read £151 — offer price £90.50.
● Daytons International Tel: 0500 145155 (page 6).

The first price quoted is the normal cost, and the second price is the offer price. The 50% skiing discount applies when two people book together.

INDOOR SKIING

Wymondley Summit Ski & Snowboard Centre, High Wycombe, Bucks: Tel: 01494 474711 one-hour ski lesson £15—£7.50; practice £15—£4.25; one-hour snowboarding lesson £25—£12.50; Snowdonia Ski Club, Esher, Surrey Tel: 01372 468318; 3 x 1hr Beginners' Ski Course £55—£27.50; Open Practice Ski (no non-skiers) £7—£3.50; Runcorn Ski Centre, Runcorn, Cheshire: Tel: 01928 701665; Beginners' Ski lesson £21—£10.50; Beginners' snowboard lesson £25—£12.25; Thallingham Ski & Snowboard Centre, Nr Stamford, Lincs: Tel: 01778 344990 1hr ski taster lesson £11—£5.50; snowboard taster lesson £12—£6; ski recreational/weekend to 6 pm £6.50—£3.25; snowboard/weekend & eve £7.50—£3.75; John Niles Leisure Resort Complex, Bracknell, Berks: Tel: 01344 860033; Chatham, Kent: Tel: 01634 827979; Plymouth, Devon: Tel: 01752 600220; Swadlowcote, Derbyshire: Tel: 01283 217200; 2 x 1hr ski lessons incl hire of boots/skis £39—£19.50; 3x1hr snowboard incl hire of boots/skis £39—£19.50. Note that the John Niles Centres are group lessons — minimum four persons. The Snowdonia, Traworth, Staffs: Tel: 0990 000001; a "real snow" experience. Ski or snowboard recreational 1 hr £14—£7; one-hour ski lesson £20—£10; one-hour snowboard lesson £22.50—£11.25.

CLIMBING — INDOOR AND OUTDOOR

The Castle Climbing Centre, Stoke Newington, London N4: Tel: 081 211 7000 Trial session £5—£2.50. The Climbing House, Liverpool, Merseyside Tel: 0151 922 2999, introduction to rock climbing £16—£8. The Rock Face, Birmingham: Tel: 0121 359 6409; trial session £30—£5; plus Chris Bonington Lecture Sat Oct 25, 1997 59—£4. Alica Rock, Edinburgh, Scotland Tel: 0131 552 7281 Beginners' Course £18—£9; Foundry Mountain Activities, Sheffield, Yorks: Tel: 0114 276 3376 Introduction to indoor climbing £80—£40 Either one-day or a weekend or 4 x Weds evenings: First Steps Rock Weekend £145—£72.50 Rock City, Hull Climbing Centre, Humberside Tel: 01482 220300 Beginners' Course £20—£10. The Bristol Climbing Centre, Avon Tel: 0117 941 3489/954 2425 Adult Beginner £35—£17.50. Three Outdoor Activity Centres The National Mountain Centre, Plas-y-Brenin, N Wales Tel: 01690 720280 Introduction to Rock Climbing one-day £50—£25. Outdoor Bould. Ullswater, Lake District Tel: 01990 134222 Introduction to Rock Climbing, residential weekend £145—£72.50 includes all equipment, food, accommodation and tuition Culver Trust, Keswick, Cumbria (Disabled) Tel: 01767 72254 Climbing/Abseiling (inc wheelchair) one-day £40—£20; Hand-creaked takes one day £35—£18.



SKATING

Backstage Ice Rink Ltd, Hampshire Tel: 01256 353266 Ice Skating Casual £3.50—FREE; Ice Disco Skating £14.50—FREE; Alexandra Palace, Wood Green, London N22 Tel: 0181-365 2121 Ice Skating £4.50—FREE; Ice Disco Skating £4.50—FREE; Hull Arena, Hull Yorks Tel: 01482 325252 Ice Skating £3.50 per session (approx 2 hrs)—FREE; Ice Disco Dancing £4 per session—FREE; Galaxy 801, Leicestershire, Cardiff, South Wales Tel: 01222 397198 Ice Skating £3.25—£3.75—FREE; Ice Disco Skating £3.75—FREE; Ice Sports Centre, Sheffield, Yorks Tel: 01142 722 108 Ice Skating Family Session £2.90—FREE; Ice Disco Skating £2.50—FREE. Take tokens to ice rink to qualify and call direct for opening hours. Sessions last approx two hours.

THE JOHN DAVIES GALLERY

STOW ON THE WOLF

From November 1st-22nd

LIONEL AGGETT EXHIBITION

"A Spanish Daybook"

50 Landscapes from the Artist's recent Iberian Tour.

Prices £600 - £3,500. Full colour catalogue £3

Call: 01451 831698 or Fax: 832477

TOMORROW: TEST YOUR DRIVING SKILLS ON A 4x4 COURSE

CHANGING TIMES

HEAD OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Simmons & Simmons is a major international law firm based in the City, providing a comprehensive range of legal services to businesses and individuals worldwide. We strive to maintain the highest possible standard of service and recognise the fundamental importance of doing so by means of a systematic and objective training and development programme for all our people. Accordingly, we now seek to appoint a Head of Training and Development reporting to our Personnel Director.

The breadth of the position demands confidence and credibility as it will involve liaising and advising at partner level as well as training lawyers and support staff at all levels.

Wide ranging responsibilities will include:-

- * Structuring the training of legal, business and marketing knowledge and the skills required for the delivery of an effective legal service to clients
- * Assisting in the development and maintenance of the appropriate management skills required within the firm

As the successful candidate you will have:-

- * A legal or other professional background or IPD qualification
- * Several years' experience in the development and delivery of training of people in a professional firm or blue chip company
- * A keen sense of commercial acumen and proven organisational ability
- * Enthusiasm, energy and initiative

This is an opportunity to play the leading role in the training and development of our lawyers and to be part of an organisation committed to using learning creatively. Reflecting our commitment, a substantial remuneration package is envisaged.



For further information, in complete confidence, please apply in writing to Adrian Fox, Stephen Rodway or Nick Peacock at Quarry Douglall Recruitment, 37-41 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4EJ. Confidential fax 0171 831 4394. This assignment is being handled on an exclusive basis by Quarry Douglall Recruitment. All direct applications will be forwarded to QD.

SIMMONS & SIMMONS

London Paris Brussels Lisbon Milan Rome Abu Dhabi Hong Kong Shanghai New York

DOWN TO BUSINESS

BANKING

To £57,000
If you play your part in the development of a very promising banking department in the London office of this major regional firm, you will reap the rewards. A super move for a banking lawyer with 1-4 years' ppe and keen on acquisition or property finance, distressed debt or corporate support work. Ref: T12006

PROJECT FINANCE

To £100,000
There are few better places in the world to be a project finance lawyer than this US firm. Its London office is a major hub of its first class practice, and the pay for lawyers with 3-5 years' ppe reflects what an opportunity this is. The City cannot generally offer choices to match this. Ref: T33160

TAX

To £80,000
At Big Six accountants like this one, the career opportunities are just enormous, whether you are at newly qualified or partner level. You will start off as a tax consultant working in a multi-disciplinary group and will work towards a more business-oriented consultancy role. Ref: T44060

PROPERTY FINANCE

To £55,000
With a property practice like this leading medium-sized City firm has, the spin-offs are of the highest quality, a description that also describes its property finance group. There are real openings to help expand the practice and we reward for doing so if you have 0-4 years' ppe in property finance. Ref: T40950

EC/COMPETITION

To £65,000
Partnership is very much on the agenda for the 1-5 years qualified EC/competition lawyer who joins this top 10 City firm with experience of UK and EC work, including merger clearance, monopoly enquiries, RTPA and advisory work. Language skills and an EC academic qualification would impress. Ref: T27857

CO/CO

To £Excellent ex-pat
All now for something completely different. Push back the frontiers by joining the Kiev office of this well-known firm. You will ideally have 2-3 years' ppe in company/commercial work and speak basic Russian or Ukrainian. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Take it while you're young. Ref: T44221

EMPLOYMENT

To £50,000
There are real opportunities to join the employment department at this medium-sized City firm and help develop it as a key practice area. If you have 1-2 years' ppe and consider yourself to be an ambitious and energetic lawyer, then this firm would like to hear from you. Ref: T44156



For further information, in complete confidence, please contact Nicola Forbes, Stephen Rodway or Kate Sutcliffe (all qualified lawyers) on 0171-405 6042 (0171-976 5742 or 0171-354 3077 evenings/weekends) or write to them at Quarry Douglall Recruitment, 37-41 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4EJ. Confidential fax 0171 831 4394.

LONDON • BIRMINGHAM • LEEDS • MANCHESTER • HONG KONG • PARIS • NEW YORK • STONEY • MELBOURNE • AMSTERDAM • TORONTO • VANCOUVER

COMMERCIAL FRAUD

To £55,000
A fantastic opportunity for a senior lawyer with 4-5 years' ppe to head the corporate fraud/white collar crime department at this niche firm. The position will lead rapidly to equity partnership, but you will need a small following and be able to do day solicitor and legal aid work. Ref: T41276

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

To £Excellent
Professional support roles are quickly becoming the fashionable way to maintain a City lifestyle and pay package without the pressure that fee-earning brings. Walk down the corridor at this top 10 City firm if you have 3+ years' ppe in either corporate finance or international finance work. Ref: T40191

TAX/TRUSTS/ENTERTAINMENT

To £48,000
Sangsters only, please. This leading West End entertainment firm has some exceptionally high-profile and glamorous clients, and it will be your job to give them top quality offshore tax and trusts advice. You will have 2-3 years' ppe and a basic knowledge of corporate matters as well. Ref: T43727

CONSTRUCTION Hong Kong

To £Excellent ex-pat
There has been no let up in the pace of life in Hong Kong since the handover and it is still the lawyers' playground. Trust yourself and join this leading local firm as a construction lawyer with 2-4 years' ppe. You need experience in preparing and reviewing tender documents, but no languages. Ref: T7120

CORPORATE TAX

To £47,000
This top 20 City firm has advised on some of the biggest corporate deals of the last year, so the chance to provide corporate support as a tax lawyer with 2-4 years' ppe will give you a big boost. You will also work on tax-based structured finance and tax aspects of international cross-border matters. Ref: T25270

PROPERTY

To £36,000
All the benefits you would expect from a top City firm plus one of the friendliest atmospheres around are on offer as the top 25 practice. You will be a general commercial property lawyer with 0-2 years' ppe or a residential property lawyer with 1-2 years' ppe. Ref: T28370

CORPORATE

To £56,000
Smaller but perfectly formed, that sums up this leading medium-sized City firm. It has a client and deals list that many of its larger rivals would envy and can offer corporate lawyers with 2-5 years' ppe the chance to gain a wide range of quality experience. This is a name that will look very good on your CV. Ref: T19782

PRIVATE PRACTICE & IN-HOUSE

INSURANCE NON-CONT

£200-£450,000
Pre-embled City practice with strong international network seeks corporate partner with proven track record in insurance. The firm acts for an increasing number of insurers and has considerable strength and depth on the contentious and policy/procedural side. The partner sought will complement the existing successful team through his or her corporate transactional expertise in the insurance sector. (Ref: T1027)

PROP/PROP FINANCE

US SALARY
Usually for a top tier New York firm, our office has been active in recruiting contentious lawyers for its London office, and is now looking for junior and senior associates in mainstream commercial property and property finance. A number of UK lawyers have already joined the firm, and there is a clear intent to build a genuine, full service multinational partnership. Exceptional rates of pay. (Ref: T2611)

CORPORATE

TO £65,000
Established medium-sized City firm with a strong corporate finance practice is looking for an ambitious associate with at least 3 years' relevant experience. Usually for a firm of this size and orientation, there are ample opportunities for career progression for an ambitious associate who is prepared to take a leading role in exploiting the potential of the firm's available client-base. (Ref: T16902)

IN-HOUSE LIME COMPANY

£50-£60,000-BENES
International commodities and trading company seeks lawyer with experience of insurance, shipping, international trade or commodities. Will play a commercial role advising senior management on international affairs and disputes, related to the company's core business. London office with opportunities to travel and grow the legal function. Minimum of 3 years' experience required. (Ref: T16768)

EMPLOYMENT

TO £42,000
What was once a niche practice has expanded rapidly in recent years. Drawing on household name corporate clients, the Employment Department can offer associates, with 2-3 years' PQE, high quality work and excellent opportunities for career progression in a close-knit, supportive environment. (Ref: T20180)

IN-HOUSE FINANCE/RETAILING

CTOP US BANK
Highly successful, premier US Bank seeks 3-5 year capital markets/and trading lawyer for its prestigious London HQ. Opportunity to join a vibrant, fully integrated and dynamic team where you will receive a very competitive remuneration for you to fill a senior knowledge role covering stock trading, repos, derivatives, etc. The environment provides excellent support with performance-related remuneration. (Ref: T29723)

COMPANY/COMMERCIAL

TO £ ALL LEVELS
Rapidly growing corporate group in this International City firm needs experienced company/commercial lawyers at all levels, from newly qualified onwards. The planned expansion of this department, with referrals from the firm's serviced property, media and energy client list, will give ambitious lawyers the opportunity to work with a fast track to senior quality work and more responsibility. (Ref: T20711)

BANKING FINANCE

TO £ ALL LEVELS
City office of dynamic medium firm seeks banking/finance lawyers at all levels from one year upwards to join its rapidly expanding team. This well regarded group, with top quality banking clients and a wide range of work, will provide excellent career progression for lawyers with high grade banking experience. Ideal if you want to work in a supportive environment and avoid over specialisation. (Ref: T20725)

IN-HOUSE BANK/FRENCH SPEAKING

LCITY
A role has arisen within this pre-eminent global and highly successful investment bank for a French speaking banking lawyer. The role is broad and will include general banking, lease finance, general counsel and risk management. For the right candidate, previous banking experience is not essential although a City background is a pre-requisite. (Ref: T20971)

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

TO £49,000
A number of junior solicitor positions are sought for flexible roles within this high profile Commercial Property Department at a top tier firm. Will handle a broad range of property finance, mainstream landlord and tenant, and investment work. Policy of the firm is for junior solicitors to develop a rounded expertise in property matters early in their careers and to take immediate responsibility. (Ref: T2114)

For further information on these, and the many other vacancies registered with us, please contact Andy Castfield or Yvonne Smyth (both qualified lawyers) on 0171-523 3838 (01493-828110 evenings/weekends). For in-house vacancies please contact Yasmin Phillips on 0171-523 3822 (0171-376 4968 evenings/weekends) or write to us at ZMB, Recruitment Consultants, 37 Sun Street, London EC2M 2PY. Confidential fax 0171-523 3839. E-mail andy@zmb.co.uk



Switch on to the Future...

Excellent Salary & Benefits Midlands

One of the top 100 companies in the UK, National Grid is the largest, privately owned, independent transmission company in the world. It is at the heart of electricity in England and Wales operating the high voltage transmission system which is known as the "national grid". Carrying electricity from power stations to suppliers it delivers to over 23 million customers.

The National Grid was formed in March 1990 as part of the privatisation of the electricity supply industry and became responsible for transmission. Since then it has floated as a separate company with an annual turnover of over a billion pounds and employs around 4,000 people.

A vacancy has arisen within the Legal Department which operates as an integral part of Company business activities. The successful applicant will join a team of young lawyers, reporting directly to the senior solicitor. Ideally you will have 4-7 years ppe gained in private practice with a leading law firm or in-house within the legal department of a utility. Although expected to work as part of a team, you will have the knowledge and confidence to work autonomously, handling substantial matters with little guidance.

With a breadth of proven experience of commercial law, you will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the principles of the regulatory and contractual framework governing the electricity industry in England and Wales. You will also be expected to provide advice on general contractual matters and provide advice to the business development unit on issues affecting overseas projects.

To discuss this opportunity in complete confidence please contact Charlotte Faherty BA (Hons) on 0121 200 2660 quoting reference 36155 or send your CV to her with a covering letter, including current remuneration by 4th November 1997. This is a retained assignment and all third party applications will be forwarded to Reuter Simkin.

Reuter Simkin
85-89 Colmore Row
Birmingham B3 2PS
Tel: 0121 200 2660
Fax: 0121 200 2651
E-mail: reuter@psd.co.uk
Internet: www.psd.co.uk



PSD

Reuter Simkin
Legal Recruitment



Senior IT Disputes Lawyer and IP Lawyer

London

Masons is described by Chambers Guide 1997-8 as having "the best IT litigation practice in the country". The Information and Technology Group, comprising a team of contentious and non-contentious lawyers, wishes to develop and strengthen this focus area of Masons' business.

IT Disputes Lawyer

You will advise commercial users and suppliers of IT/telecommunications systems and services upon their project problems, which may lead or have led to a dispute. You are likely to be a Partner/Senior Associate with:

- 7+ years ppe of IT and commercial litigation experience
- Be able to lead and manage litigation teams
- A working knowledge and a keen interest in IT
- A flair for marketing

IP Lawyer

You will join the Information and Technology Group which undertakes a mix of contentious and non-contentious IP work for IT and telecoms clients. The Group wishes to expand the range of services it is able to offer to clients. You are likely to be a Partner/Senior Associate with:

- 7+ years ppe of contentious and non-contentious IP experience with an IT focus
- A small team who may wish to move with you
- A wish to develop and expand your IP/IT practice
- Strong marketing skills

Interested candidates should forward their CVs to Penny Stevenson at Michael Page Legal, Page House, 39-41 Parker Street, London WC2B 5LN, fax 0171 831 6662 or telephone her in complete confidence on 0171 269 2242. This assignment is being handled exclusively by Michael Page Legal and all CVs sent direct will be forwarded to them.



Industry Exciting Opportunities

Norwegian National
Major contracting company, specialising in the oil & gas industry, requires a Norwegian for challenging role supporting the group's growing Norwegian national operations. General contracting experience an advantage. Travel involved.

Ref: 38390 Samantha Malin

Company/Commercial
Multi-national seeks 2 lawyers with up to 5 years' ppe to join expanding legal team at the firm's regional headquarters. Candidates with a general commercial background would be ideally suited for these exciting positions. Some EC experience advantageous. Ideal first in-house role. Ref: 38391 Samantha Malin

Construction
Pioneering transport organisation seeks ambitious commercial construction lawyer with 3 years' ppe to advise on and draft wide range of contracts on major issues. Familiarity with computer contracts is desirable; experience in contract drafting is a must.

Ref: 38252 Andrew Regan

Commercial/Employment
Located in the heart of the City, our client is a major leader in the insurance-broking field. An exciting opportunity has arisen for a company commercial lawyer with 2-3 yrs' ppe. Employment experience is desirable as is an proactive and amiable personality. Excellent package. Ref: 38361 Andrew Regan

Reuter Simkin
5 Brasenose Buildings
Chancery Lane
London EC4A 1DY
Tel: 0171 405 4161
Fax: 0171 242 1261
E-Mail: reuter@psd.co.uk
Internet: www.psd.co.uk



PSD

Reuter Simkin
Legal Recruitment

Leave those schools alone

LAW

● NO WIN, NO WIN? 41
● INSURANCE DOUBT 41

Education litigation undermines heads and misleads parents, says Robert Boyd

Leave those schools alone

Students are threatening to sue examination boards over the re-marking of disputed A-level papers after a record number of appeals against grades this summer. Some want to claim for the extra costs they will incur after missing the last free university places: those waiting for appeal results face the introduction of annual £1,000 tuition fees next October.

This is the latest example of what some lawyers claim is an explosion of litigation in the world of education. The week before, it emerged that three students were suing parents for financial support. Those claims are not against educational establishments themselves, but many others have been.

The recent award of damages against the school authority that failed to diagnose Pamela Phelps's dyslexia, leaving her with a reading age of seven, was a legal landmark. The £45,000 award marked the first time in which a court has awarded damages for undetected dyslexia.

There seems little doubt that other dyslexia-related claims will follow. Undetected learning difficulties and bullying, which was also involved in the Phelps case, are two areas in which schools can leave themselves open to litigation.

But it is true to say that we are entering an era in which expensive, American-style lawsuits will become a feature of the British education system.

The fact that some lawyers predict a litigation landslide is largely explained by the fact that the "school bus" has now replaced the ambulance as the most likely vehicle for lawyers to chase for new business, particularly as the school bus often attracts legal aid for actions where there is nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Sadly, however, the growing culture of schools-bashing, and the notion that if there is disappointment then someone else is to blame, means that parents and pupils are misled,

and the professionalism, confidence and morale of the heads and teachers are undermined. The reality, however, is that where education and other consumer claims are concerned, the law in Britain is almost as far from that in America as it can be. It is much harder to prove negligence under the UK system than it is in most parts of the US, and the procedures and methods of quantifying damages are different by light years. There are few kinds of claim against a school that would be capable even of attracting damages, let alone a large award, in this country.

Lawyers who raise false hopes of damages for examination disappointments ignore the words of Lord Justice Evans in the 1994 Keating case: "A mere allegation that with better teaching the child would have achieved improved examination results or a more highly paid career is unlikely to lead to damages."

In the same case, it was also pointed out that teachers cannot rectify inequalities of endowment between one pupil and the another.

Earlier, in a case known as *ex parte H* (1985), Lord Justice Slade put this even more clearly: "There is no question of an obligation to provide a child with the best possible education. There is no duty to provide such a Utopian system or to educate him to his maximum potential."

Similarly, Joanna Holloway of the City University of London, commenting on the Keating case, showed common sense in saying that educating children is not as straightforward as manufacturing products. Every child is unique. There can be no guarantee that tried and tested teaching techniques will benefit every pupil.

This sensible approach to what is expected of a British school is reflected in the outcome of cases brought by parents against schools in recent years. My own firm, for



Robert Boyd at Clifton College, Bristol. Address the teacher, he says — not a lawyer

instance, advises more than 500 independent schools and deals with about 1,500 parental disputes each year, of which about 10,000 have produced some degree of litigation over the past decade. More than 95 per cent of the defended cases have been resolved in favour of the school.

At the root of many of these cases is a claim by the school for unpaid fees. In response, parents often raise a complaint about teaching standards or pastoral care which was never mentioned before. And just as there is no shortage of lawyers eager to exploit parent-school divisions, so are there educational psychologists able to invent a disorder that the school supposedly should have spotted and dealt with earlier.

I am not talking of the relatively few cases in which gross abnormalities have gone undetected, or the anguish of persistent and concerted bullying, but of

psycho-babble such as "semantic processing difficulties", which was recently used — successfully — as a strategy by parents to avoid paying the fees they owed.

Alleged psychological injury is another entry on the lists. In one case earlier this year, parents who owed an independent school £8,000 in unpaid fees sued on the basis of a report from a psychiatrist who claimed that the pupil concerned had suffered an "adjustment disorder" after examination results were withheld because of the arrears.

The case went to court but was dismissed on the ground that it was scandalous, frivolous, vexatious and an abuse of process.

In the face of such clear legal evidence, parents would do far better to learn how to deal with teachers in identifying the real cause of problems rather than

DAVID WHITE

Biting study of the legal profession

Barristers regularly encounter murder in their professional lives, prosecuting or defending at a criminal trial, arguing for compensation for relatives of the deceased, or making submissions about the possible release of the offender on life licence. In P.D. James's entertaining new novel, *A Certain Justice* (Faber & Faber, £15.99), the legal profession comes into closer contact with homicide when a barrister is knifed to death at 8 Pawlet Court, Middle Temple.

Venetia Aldridge, QC, "one of the country's most formidable cross-examiners", is found dead in her room in chambers by her senior clerk, a full-bottomed ceremonial wig on her head, her brief in a forthcoming grievous bodily harm trial open on her desk. Conscious of the proprieties, the senior clerk knows that "there was a higher priority even than the police; he had to ring Head of Chambers".

When Commander Adam Dalglish and Detective Inspector Kate Miskin arrive, they learn that the suspects include a number of other barristers. Venetia was threatening to report a member of her chambers for a serious breach of professional standards ("if this got about, even as a rumour, he would never take silk"). She was competing with another colleague to become head of chambers. A barrister Member of Parliament had recently ended an affair with Venetia at his wife's insistence.

Several other barristers have their own selfish reasons for not regretting Venetia's death. So does a female pupil whom Venetia intended to veto for a place in chambers, and the senior clerk who was to replace a practice manager. Among the other suspects are Garry Ashe, recently acquitted at the Old Bailey on a murder charge, against which he had been defended by Ms Aldridge, since when he has begun to live with her 18-year-old daughter, causing considerable concern to Venetia.

Much of *A Certain Justice* is a biting study of the legal profession. The Head of Chambers tries to recall a rumour, but "like so much else, it had escaped him". Venetia had rarely been present at significant moments in her child's life because "there was always a court attendance, a meeting in chambers, something which couldn't be put off". Too many prosecuting counsel "could never believe that a jury could take in any fact that hadn't been explained to them three times".

On occasions, the author's homework lets her down. It is implausible that becoming head of chambers "would be important" to a lawyer like Venetia, or that any barrister would contemplate killing a rival, or be

suspected of such a crime, to take on that burdensome role. No doubt Venetia and her lover wanted to keep their affair secret, but how had it "helped that he was a member of Lincoln's Inn, not the Middle Temple"? Who is the model for the superhuman Mr Justice Moorcroft, whose ability to sum up to the jury was so good that there had never been a successful appeal in one of his cases?

P.D. James is interested in the professional ethics of the defence lawyer. Venetia saw her role in unambiguous terms: "It was simply to win." When she warns her daughter that Ashe is dangerous, and "may even be evil", Octavia replies: "So why did you get him off?" This professional detachment is mirrored in the novel by the absence of warmth in the personal relations between the lawyers. Ms Aldridge was stabbed in the heart, but it was evidently not the vital organ. There were many who had admired Venetia Aldridge but "few who had liked her".

The Head of Chambers reflects of his colleagues: "I don't even know them." None of the barristers offers any assistance to their receptionist when her young brother is being prosecuted for supplying a small quantity of cannabis.

A Certain Justice presents a uniformly unflattering picture of selfish barristers whose only human virtue is a willingness to recognise that "being difficult in chambers is practically an art-form". There would be no room at 8 Pawlet Court for the prosecuting counsel who, during a case at the Old Bailey earlier this month, broke down while reading out details of the systematic torture of a baby by the defendant.

The egotism and narcissism that James associates with the legal profession are made starker by the contrast with the compassion which Dalglish and Miskin show for those afflicted by tragedy.

When Dalglish wishes to avoid emotional involvement, it is because the pressures of the job make it "necessary to grow a carapace, however fragile, of acceptance and detachment if one was to remain competent and sane". The author does not recognise that a similar plea in mitigation might be made on behalf of barristers.

James knows that a criminal trial "wasn't designed — how could it be? — to elicit the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth". The same is true of a detective novel, however skilful and enthralling it may be. The Bar pleads not guilty as charged in this indictment.

● The author is a practising barrister and a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.



COUNSEL

DAVID PANNICK QC

LEGAL APPOINTMENTS

Legal Counsel

Brussels

GE Capital Fleet Services is a leading European fleet leasing business, as well as being one of the most successful of GE Capital's businesses. Working with companies of all sizes on a pan-European basis across 12 countries we lease, manage and provide claims management for company fleets of cars, vans and other specialty vehicles.

GE Capital's business is acquisitive and continues to grow at a rapid pace. This growth is supported by a European legal team which is now seeking to appoint another legal counsel for its Brussels headquarters.

Working closely with the European Counsel, this will be an autonomous, challenging and varied role. You will manage your own work and actively participate in business development. In particular, you will participate in acquisitions and key accounts, and share responsibility for necessary compliance and regulatory issues, liaising with local lawyers in countries for which you have primary responsibility.

To perform this role it is likely that you will have 5-8 years' relevant commercial and transactional experience, some gained with a leading international law firm. This will

include European cross-border transactions and commercial and contractual arrangements. Familiarity with the tax and accounting issues which impact on a leasing business in Europe would be a distinct advantage.

To work in this fast moving and team oriented environment, you must be a resilient self starter with excellent communication skills. You will have a strong academic record, ideally a combined common and civil law training, and you will be fluent in English and at least one other European language.

This is an executive appointment combining an attractive salary and benefits package, including assistance with relocation if required. There will be real prospects for global career progression within the GE group legal team.

For further information in strict confidence, please contact our retained consultants, Lizzie Orange or Sally Horrox at ZMB, 37 Sun Street, London EC2M 2PY. Alternatively, telephone them on 0171 523 3638 (evenings/weekends 0181 740 4108). Confidential fax 0171 523 3639. E-mail: lizzie@zmb.co.uk Closing date for applications is 7th November 1997.



An equal opportunity employer

*Trademark of General Electric Company, U.S.A., which is not connected with the English company of a similar name.

Noble lord ducks the questions

LORD IRVINE of Lairg was greeted with polite applause rather than rotten eggs at the Law Society conference in Cardiff on Saturday, despite the leaking of his entire speech 24 hours in advance, and his remark that the legal profession had done nothing "other than to fall lower and lower in public estimation" in recent years. But solicitors were unimpressed by his decision not to sit on the question panel afterwards, as agreed months before by his predecessor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern.

Lord Falconer of Thoroton, the new and refreshingly outspoken Solicitor-General, was expected to be the replacement. But he suddenly found that he had urgent business in London. Step forward Roger Smith, director of the Legal Action Group — and probably the most articulate critic of the Lord Chancellor's legal reforms. Touché.

Defence policy

ONE RESULT of the leaking of Lord Irvine's reforms was that the keynote speech by



Lord Irvine: polite applause

Phillip Sycamore, the Law Society President, was eclipsed. So only solicitors present at the conference will have noted that he favours experimenting with a public defender system. If defendants were represented by lawyers they had freely chosen, who acted independently in their clients' interests and had the resources to do a proper job, there was, he said, no reason to oppose an experiment.

Name game

THE DAYS of Sue, Grabbit & Runne may be over. The Law Society is to abolish most restrictions governing the

names that law firms can use, so that they can call themselves almost anything they like. Before reaching his decision, the society consulted the profession — to find it hopelessly divided on the issue.

"It is high time the profession got rid of antiquated rules," said one respondent. "We should move forward." Another said: "It is pathetic that you and your colleagues should waste your time and spend our money on such footling points." And a third added: "The sooner we abolish 'marketing' and go back to a 'no advertising' era, the better. However, I have absolutely no faith in my views being widely supported and therefore I am ordering my flashing neon sign to advertise my new name, which will be 'Quick Fix Legal Services'."

Nominations for most amusing law firm names — if genuine, so much the better — to Scrivenor.

● Changing sides: Robert Venables, the head of the Charity Commission's legal division for eight years, has become a consultant with the firm of Bircham & Co, which specialises in charity law.

SCRIVENOR

STUART & FRANCIS

QUEEN'S COUNSEL

HOW LAWYERS SAY "NO"...



MEGACORP PLC



NO WIN, NO FEE?



Corporate Finance Lawyers

As a leading international law firm, Norton Rose has a reputation for the highest quality of service to financial institutions and corporate clients around the world. Our dynamic Corporate Finance Group of more than 120 lawyers based in London is growing fast in response to client demands and now seeks exceptional corporate finance lawyers with at least one year's experience and with the capability to develop their skills in two key areas:

- Cross-border mergers & acquisitions
- International equity issues

The team needs individuals with character and resourcefulness, high achievers who are commercially aware and excited by the prospect of working on major international transactions.

If this sounds like you, we can offer you the chance to develop your specialist skills across a range of challenging and stimulating work. We offer a supportive team environment designed to get the best out of all our people. The rewards and career potential will be exceptional for the right candidates.

For further information and details of our opportunities for career development please write with your CV to Celia Staples.



Norton Rose

Kempson House, Camomile Street, London EC3A 7AN
Tel: +44 0171 283 6000

LONDON HONG KONG BRUSSELS PARIS SINGAPORE BAHRAIN PIRAEUS MOSCOW

DEPUTY SECRETARY

Our client, a major international marketing and communications group based in the West End seeks to recruit a Deputy Company Secretary. Reporting to the Company Secretary, the successful candidate should have proven plc company secretarial skills.

In addition to the filing of statutory documentation on behalf of the listed parent and a number of subsidiary companies, responsibilities will also include assisting in the administration of the company pension schemes, the management of the company's insurance matters, the organisation of the AGM

and the co-ordinating of brand name registration and instructing trade mark agents, the preparation of circulars and other regulatory matters. As well as core secretarial skills, legal experience would be of great interest as a certain amount of contract, employment and property work may be involved.

Applications are welcomed from either Chartered Secretaries or Lawyers with relevant employment experience, spanning this mix of company secretarial and legal work. An attractive salary package is offered for this appointment.

For further details please contact Fiona Boxall or Jane Wallace or send them your CV.

CHAMBERS
PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT

23 LONG LANE, LONDON EC1A 9HL TELEPHONE: (0171) 606 8844 FAX: (0171) 600 1793

Company/Commercial Lawyer

Salaried Partner - Excellent Remuneration Package

Our clients are a well established, successful and forward thinking five partner City practice, with a wide ranging national and international clientbase.

The firm seeks to recruit a City or equivalent trained lawyer with at least 5PQE to partner level, probably aged 30-45, to handle a wide range of mainly private company work, with the emphasis on commercial rather than company matters.

Their clients require a high level of personal involvement and commitment, which results in a challenging and demanding work environment.

This position offers an opportunity to make a significant contribution to the continuing development of the department, which is reflected in the generous remuneration package on offer.

For further information in complete confidence, please contact Marian Lloyd-Jones.



LIPSON LLOYD-JONES
LEGAL RECRUITMENT
127 Cheapside
London EC2V 6BT
Tel: 0171 600 1690
Fax: 0171 600 1972

TOP IP LAWYER

Our client seeks to appoint an intellectual property lawyer to join its legal/managerial team in Central London.

This important position has a broad remit and will span a range of contentious and non-contentious issues embracing high level and topical matters. Although focusing mainly on copyright and competition matters, you may also be required to advise on employment, software and company law.

A strong-minded self-starter, able to negotiate on behalf of this company

IN-HOUSE MEDIA

confidently and independently, displaying initiative and commercial vision, you will have 4-5 years' ppe and proven intellectual property experience gained either in private practice or within industry.

You should be able to demonstrate flexibility together with tact and diplomacy to manage varied situations, gaining credibility quickly on a business and intellectual level both inside and outside the company.

An attractive salary will be offered, reflecting the importance of this position.

For further details please contact Morwenna Lewis, Sonya Rayner or Aileen Shepherd or send them a copy of your CV.

CHAMBERS
PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT

23 LONG LANE, LONDON EC1A 9HL TELEPHONE: (0171) 606 8844 FAX: (0171) 600 1793

Why Because

PRUDENTIAL

MAPLES and CALDER ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW Cayman Islands

FINANCE LAWYER

3 - 5 years qualified

Highly Competitive Salary

Maples and Calder is the largest firm of attorneys-at-law in the Cayman Islands. With a multinational client base primarily comprised of leading law firms and financial institutions based across Europe, the United States and the Far East, the firm advises on Cayman Islands law but in relation to the structuring of a wide range of transactions which encompass all aspects of international business.

Due to continued expansion there now exists an excellent opportunity for a top class lawyer to join their highly motivated team in the Cayman Islands. The work will be challenging, with a demanding mix of international financial transactions. The financial rewards and long-term career prospects are excellent and the Cayman Islands provides a very attractive environment.

The ideal candidate will have a first class academic background and at least 3 years post qualification experience with a leading City firm in any one or more of the fields of banking, securitisation, corporate finance, capital markets and mutual funds. Salary will be by negotiation and is extremely attractive. There is no personal taxation in the Cayman Islands.

For further information in complete confidence please contact Jane Foster at Laurence Simons International on 0171 831 3270 or write to her at the address below enclosing a full CV.

LAURENCE SIMONS
International Legal Recruitment

Craven House, 121 Kingsway, London WC2B 6PA Tel: +44 (0)171 831 3270, Fax: +44 (0)171 831 4429

Central London

We aim to be an equal opportunity employer.

Persuade us to want you.

Tony Yeaman
Health Law Group
Beachcroft Stanleys
20 Fumival Street
LONDON EC4A 1BN
Fax: 0171 831 6160

... ..



Please write to Graduate Recruitment, Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering
4 Canons Garden, Bell Mews, London, SW21 5AG

Benedict Birnberg calls for a community legal service on NHS lines and, right, Nick Hilborne on the insurance problem

A shot of success for legal aid

The cornerstone of any acceptable policy for the delivery of legal services must be access for all, not least because fair administration of justice guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights, which the Government is to incorporate into UK law, implies that each party to a civil or criminal proceeding should have an equal opportunity to present his case and neither should enjoy any substantial advantage over his opponent.

The legal aid scheme, set up nearly 50 years ago, is failing to meet that requirement. Yet last weekend, Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, whose expressed aim is a legal system which "operates in the best interests of the whole community, not just the financial interests of the legal profession", unveiled the Government's plans — a drastic curtailment of the scheme, expansion of "no win, no fee" litigation and obligatory insurance — which will do the exact opposite, reduce access to justice, drive socially responsible lawyers out of business and boost the earnings of the less scrupulous.

I believe that the time has come for radical and imaginative initiatives which would really benefit the whole community.

The postwar Attlee Government devised very different solutions to the problems of health and justice. It promulgated an NHS of salaried doctors but legal aid was channelled through a legal profession that remained privatised and profit-making and catered largely to the private client.

Let us now emulate the success of the NHS, replacing the public funding of individual solicitors and barristers, by creating the infrastructure for a genuine community legal service (CLS) of salaried personnel administered by a legal services commission independent of central or local government.

The CLS would have offices with a proper geographic spread, unlike the distribution of private practitioners, and staffed by highly qualified lawyers in all fields. They would be backed up by in-house

personnel from other professions. The service would provide the whole range of services now provided privately, serving both the fee-paying client and those unable to pay. It would have a scaled-down public subsidy. The analogy is the NHS general practitioner. But whereas the NHS relies on the taxpayer, I envisage a large part of the cost of the CLS being met by the private client, although the initial cost of setting up the scheme would have to come from public funds.

At first, the proposition may seem unrealistic, but consider the history. The legal aid scheme was devised when the country was impoverished after the war, and GDP was relatively small. Real incomes today are almost three times what they were about 50 years ago. The average private client is better able to contribute to the cost of our

deprived of legal aid and in competition with the CLS — would cease to practise, and their staffs would be absorbed into the CLS.

There would remain solicitors to cater for the wealthy corporate and private client.

I expect that most barristers will ultimately be absorbed into the CLS. The two branches of the profession would probably fuse although there would remain a residual independent Bar of specialists, a natural corollary of what I advocate would be the withering away of the legal profession as we see it today.

The Law Society and Bar Council would be wary of such a scheme. But in the next two decades or so the profession is certain to come under pressures, with less public money via legal aid subsidies and increasing competition squeezing profit margins. Already, we have seen a large fall in fee income from conveyancing.

Small firms of solicitors are in a precarious financial position, struggling to make a profit. The average partner in a solicitor's practice can look to receive a profit of between £30,000 and £60,000, com-

mensurate with doctors' salaries. Measures to streamline the law, like the Woolf civil procedure reforms, rightly endorsed by Lord Irvine, alternative dispute resolution in place of litigation, competition from licensed conveyancers and other paralegals, as well as the information technology revolution will all reduce lawyers' work generally.

Many, I think, will prefer the security of structured, salaried employment to the increasingly competitive market in which private practice will operate. Many will also prefer the greater flexibility in working arrangements and therefore job satisfaction to the great and unfair disparities in remuneration between those engaged in work paid for privately and publicly that will only increase if the Government's reported proposals are put into effect.

● The author is the senior partner of B.M. Birnberg & Co in Southwark, South London.

'A lot of the cost of an NHS-type legal aid system would be met by the client'

legal services, although admittedly the 20 per cent of our population that can be described as poor would need the subsidy that the rest of the community can afford, either through contributions paid by the private client or through a reduced state subsidy to the CLS.

Everyone would have access to a CLS office. Certain classes of work, such as conveyancing and commercial, would be entirely fee-paying. The fees would be based either on a scale or charged at a time rate, and all other services would be means-tested with a reasonably high threshold so as not to deter a client. Contingency fees and legal insurance might be two — but not the only — methods of funding a case.

The CLS would initially compete with solicitors' practices, but within a short time most private practices — those with up to 25 partners whose proportion of legal aid receipts in 1994 to 1995 varied between 17 per cent and 40 per cent,



A diagnosis of the legal aid system and "no win, no fee" proposals suggests that radical surgery is needed, says Benedict Birnberg

No win, no fee: what the client must pay anyway

Amid the furor over government plans to expand conditional fees, little attention has been paid to the problem of insurance. But as litigants will be naturally wary of incurring unlimited costs if they lose a case, it will be the availability of insurance to cover such losses which may ultimately determine the success and scope of "no win, no fee" litigation.

Personal injury actions backed by the Law Society's Accident Line Protect insurance scheme have accounted for most conditional fee cases. More than 26,500 policies have been issued. The scheme's brokers, Johnson & Higgins Marsh & McLellan, recently announced an 86 per cent increase in premiums for all cases, apart from road traffic accidents. Next month, more than two years since conditional fees for this area of litigation were introduced, a Law Society-endorsed insurance package is to be launched for medical negligence cases. Unlike Accident Line Protect, the package will offer individual not flat-rate premiums.

Peter Brown, special operations director at Johnson & Higgins, says: "With road traffic accidents, in particular, the chances of success are reasonably clear from an early stage. Medical negligence is much less predictable. There always seems to be one or two elements which skew the chances of success. Every scenario we've looked at has differences in it. Flat-rate premiums have proved impossible."

Mr Brown said his firm had started to consider how new areas of litigation could be insured for conditional fees. "The problem is how to define success. Until that problem is remedied — and I don't know if it can be by insurance people, it's really up to the lawyers — it will be very difficult to design an insurance safety net. Everyone agrees that it would be a good idea to extend conditional fees in theory. When you apply your mind to it, things are not that simple. What we are saying to the Lord Chancellor is: 'Don't widen conditional fees

and then think about insurance as an afterthought.'"

Brian Raincock, director of Litigation Protection, which also insures conditional fees, said his firm had solved the problem of insuring medical negligence by hiring independent experts to decide which cases had a good chance. To help to ensure that solicitors were experienced in the field, lower premiums were offered to members of the Association for Victims of Medical Accidents panel.

Mr Raincock said he was looking forward to a future where conditional fees were available in most areas of civil litigation. "Personal injury is one of the simplest areas to insure because liability is so easy to establish," he said. "Libel would be much more difficult. I'm not sure

it's appropriate for insurance. Conditional fees are also not suitable for large commercial cases. Solicitors are unlikely to be prepared to work on a case for two years without being paid for it. One solution might be to impose a cap on the size of damages claims, so you insure only those cases worth less than £250,000. You would need a system of vetting commercial cases, possibly using another insurer."

The Chairman of the Bar Council, Robert Owen, QC, who launched a stinging attack on conditional fees in his speech to the annual Bar conference last month and last week in *The Times*, called for more research before the scheme was extended. "The whole success of the conditional fee scheme depends on insurance," he said. "It's a difficult risk to underwrite. I don't think we have enough experience yet to know whether insurers will find it a commercially viable option."

"There is a danger that if conditional fees are allowed to supplant legal aid, we will see a serious reduction in access to justice. It is all very well to talk about extending conditional fees, but mechanisms, such as insurance, must be in place before members of the public can exercise their rights."

Access to justice could be reduced

TO ADVERTISE CALL
0171 680 6828

LEGAL APPOINTMENTS

FAX:
0171 782 7899

Opportunities in the Arabian Gulf

Trowers & Hamlin's international practice continues to go from strength to strength. From its Head Office in London and its established network of offices in the Arabian Gulf, the practice is a market leader in the Middle East and is currently engaged on complex commercial, corporate and large-scale financial work as well as having an exciting portfolio of major energy, sector, construction and engineering, cross border projects involving multi national companies. The practice is expanding and this has created opportunities for four more lawyers.

These lawyers will be based in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Oman and will form part of an international team involved in projects across the Middle East region.

These positions offer unrivalled opportunities for energetic and capable lawyers to play a significant and hands on role in the strategic development of the firm's substantial Middle East practice. These are new positions necessitated by business success and demands of our regional practice.

The principal credentials for these positions will be intellectual ability, energy and personality combined with the ability to take on early responsibility and to work independently and with initiative. We are looking for younger lawyers, probably in the range of 1 to 5 years qualified. Previous commercial experience will be expected. Construction, projects, financing and/or international experience will be an advantage. Prospects and remuneration package will both be excellent.

To apply for the job, send your curriculum vitae in confidence to: Miss Rebecca Marks, Trowers & Hamlin, 6 New Square, Lincoln's Inn, London WC2A 3RP.

The first choice for a career in law
TROWERS & HAMLIN

HARDWICKE BUILDING

As part of the planned development of Chambers, Hardwicke Building's Specialist Family Group wishes to recruit tenants of at least 7 year's call.

The successful applicant(s) will probably practice exclusively in Family Work.

All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Please apply in writing with a CV to:

Tony Wells, Chief Executive
Hardwicke Building
New Square
Lincoln's Inn
London WC2A 3SB
LDE 393.
Tel: 0171-242 2523

NEW LAW JOURNAL

A Herculean Task

Solicitors should have the same right as clients to refer cases to the Ombudsman if they are unhappy with the handling of their cases by the OSS, argues I Dean.

Political bias and the lay magistracy — the Lord Chancellor comes under fire — plus Student Focus and NLI Law Digest

To request your free sample copy of this week's NLI call: Nicola Marshall on 0181 686 9141 ext 359

LONDON AND INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

PLANNING 0-5 Years' PQE
This team handles joint venture deals between major brokers, acquisitions, reconstructions, redemptions, local and international non-contentious matters. Many of the firm's clients are incorporated in the Cayman Islands and Bermuda (so think about the travel!). Ref: 5014. Contact: Peter Godwin.

ENERGY Senior Department Head
You will have at least 6 years' PQE in any of the oil, gas or electricity sectors and have the initiative and charisma to head up the internationally renowned team of this major City firm. Ref: 4776. Contact: Pandora Guthrie.

EMPLOYMENT 1-3 Years' PQE
Top notch City firm with a strong reputation for employment law needs another team-player to handle stimulating, high profile contentious and non-contentious work. Also the opportunity to do some general commercial litigation if desired. Ref: 4881. Contact: Pandora Guthrie.

MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE 2-4 Years' PQE
Defendant oriented caseload in superb London firm (circa 40 partners). Chance to join one of the most expanding and progressive medical negligence departments and work alongside a genuinely friendly and supportive team. Ref: 4496. Contact: Jane Glasberg.

INFORMATION OFFICERS 4 Years Plus PQE
We have numerous know-how positions in the corporate and banking departments of large and medium-sized firms. No experience required for full-time or part-time roles. Strong academics and excellent organisational skills essential. Ref: 4198. Contact: Jane Glasberg.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS/IT
Leading team in this field in one of the City's most profitable practices seeks high-calibre assistant with impressive experience in international outsourcing and telecoms regulatory work. European language skills an advantage. Ref: 5012. Contact: Jane Glasberg.

PROJECT FINANCE/CORPORATE Japan/Far East
Leading team in this field in one of the City's most profitable practices seeks high-calibre assistant with impressive experience in international outsourcing and telecoms regulatory work. European language skills an advantage. Ref: 5012. Contact: Jane Glasberg.

SHIPPING LITIGATION 2-5 Years' PQE
Wonderful opportunity to join respected City maritime practice where you will be given early responsibility and a stimulating caseload. Experience will include carriage of goods/damage/property disputes and international arbitration. Ref: 4585. Contact: Cleo Binn.

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY c.2 Years' PQE
Young lawyer with c.2 years PQE in residential conveyancing is invited to join premier central London firm. A high quality of work and dazzling portfolio of clients awaits the successful applicant. Ref: 4253. Contact: Cleo Binn.

CORPORATE INSURANCE 1-3 Years' PQE
This team handles joint venture deals between major brokers, acquisitions, reconstructions, redemptions, local and international non-contentious matters. Many of the firm's clients are incorporated in the Cayman Islands and Bermuda (so think about the travel!). Ref: 5014. Contact: Peter Godwin.

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY 2-3 Years' PQE
Break out of the city and work for this specialist property firm in the West End. With a strong client base of medium sized companies you will undertake commercial work and development conveyancing. Ref: 5051. Contact: Peter Godwin.

PERSONAL INJURY SPECIALISTS 1-4 Years' PQE
Expanding niche practice requires two client focused defendant P.I. lawyers to join large friendly team handling a caseload of RTA, EL & PL work. The firm attracts excellent staff and wishes to maintain this emphasis on quality. Substantial package. Ref: 4565. Contact: Peter Godwin.

ELECTRONICS - IN-HOUSE Home Counties
Major electronics organisation has an opening for a lawyer in a company commercial role. The legal department is particularly strong, bringing in a broad range of work and offering good career prospects and variety. 3 to 6 years' PQE with strong communication skills. Ref: 5050. Contact: Richard Gawn.

INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION CO - IN-HOUSE London
First time appointment in this attractive role dealing with all legal issues affecting the company. Position requires excellent communication and negotiating skills as well as a strong understanding of the culture and operating conditions in the media industry. Previous in-house experience an advantage. Ref: 4329. Contact: Richard Gawn.

TELECOMS - IN-HOUSE Home Counties
Leading European Telecoms company requires a further lawyer to join their informal but busy team. Excellent career development opportunities. Previous telecoms experience would be advantageous. Ref: 4871. Contact: Richard Gawn.

COMPLIANCE (SFA) - IN-HOUSE City
A flourishing Futures and Options broker which is going through a phenomenal period of growth seeks a lawyer for a predominantly compliance oriented role. Extremely varied role with loads of responsibility and front-office involvement. 1-3 years' PQE. Ref: 4993. Contact: Paul Rumsdell.

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT - IN-HOUSE City
A fairly senior lawyer (5-12 years' PQE) is sought for an extremely well-paid position in the London office of a major international Investment Management company. Previous in-house experience within a LAUTRO regulated company is essential. Ref: 4889. Contact: Paul Rumsdell.

BANKING - IN-HOUSE City
General role offered to 2-3 year qualified solicitor with strong loan documentation experience. Work will involve mainly structured finance and commodity finance, but will touch on a wide variety of other matters across the financing spectrum. Ref: 4679. Contact: Paul Rumsdell.



Hughes-Castell International Legal Recruitment Consultants

London Office: 87 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1BD. Tel: 0171 242 0303 Fax: 0171 242 7111
Hong Kong Office: 701 and 702 East Town Building, 41 Lockhart Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong.

ALL BOX NUMBER
REFILES SHOULD BE
ADDRESSED TO:

BOX No: —

c/o TIMES
NEWSPAPERS
P.O. BOX 3553,
VIRGINIA ST,
LONDON, E1 6GA

LION INTOXILYZER® 6000UK

- a one-day course on the new evidential breath machine
- Test the 6000 for yourself
- Earn 6 CPD hours while you drink
- Speakers include: Dr. PAUL WILLIAMS, designer/project leader of the new device and NEIL CORRE, solicitor and author of books on criminal and road traffic law.

Telephone: Mary Allen
61446-744244

The National Mediation Centre

offers lawyers the opportunity of training in mediation skills. Mediation is rapidly establishing itself as an alternative to litigation in a wide range of disputes and conflicts.

The Foundation Programme for Mediators is accredited by the Law Society and carries 41.5 hours CPD. For further details
Phone: 01792 469626

GROUP LEGAL ADVISER

Our client, a world leader in cosmetics, offers a unique portfolio of famous, quality brands to consumers across five continents. The group comprises four main cosmetics divisions: salon, consumer, perfumes and beauty and active cosmetics. It has earned an outstanding international reputation through its capacity for research and innovation and is now developing products and markets for the third millennium.

It now seeks to recruit a Group Legal Adviser based at its offices in Central London to be responsible for UK operations. Reporting to the UK managing

director, you will handle all the group's day to day legal affairs. Responsibility for instructing external lawyers (when required) falls within the Group Legal Adviser's remit.

The successful candidate will have approximately 10 years' experience and should have prior experience of working in industry, preferably in the fmog sector. You will be commercially orientated, proactive, have a flexible approach and a strong confident personality. You must also feel comfortable working in a very fast moving, constantly changing environment.

Reasonable fluency in French is essential.

c.£70,000
+ car and benefits

For further details please contact Sonya Rayner, Morwenna Lewis or Aileen Shepherd or send them a copy of your CV.

CHAMBERS
PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT

23 LONG LANE, LONDON EC1A 9HL. TELEPHONE: (0171) 606 8844 FAX: (0171) 600 1793

Banking Lawyer

GROUP LEGAL

LONDON

Société Générale is one of Europe's leading commercial and investment banks with an extensive international network. The London operation provides a full range of financial services advising UK corporate, financial and institutional clients. It is supported by its Group Legal Department which is regarded as an integral part of the commercial process.

The Group Legal Department is seeking to recruit a lawyer with up to four years' experience gained in a leading law firm or investment bank. Experience should include general commercial banking and a familiarity with ISDA documentation. The successful applicant will join a vibrant and cohesive team and will also work closely with the Bank's legal team in Paris. An attractive remuneration package and excellent career opportunities are on offer.

For further information please contact Andrea Melnick (solicitor) at the address or telephone number below. This assignment is being handled exclusively by Garfield Robbins and all direct and third party applications will be forwarded to them.

5 Wornwood Street
London EC2M 1RQ
Tel: 0171 417 1400
Fax: 0171 417 1444

**GARFIELD
ROBBINS**
LEGAL RECRUITMENT
CONSULTANTS
LONDON • LEEDS

With 54,000 employees worldwide, 2000 branches in France and 500 offices in more than 70 countries, Société Générale, international banking group, is active in every sector of banking and finance

Please contact Andrea Melnick (solicitor) on 0171 417 1400 (evenings/weekends 0171 431 5860) Email: andream@garfieldrobbins.co.uk.

TRAVERS SMITH BRAITHWAITE

A CONSCIOUS APPROACH TO QUALITY OF WORK AND OF LIFE

Financial Services and Investment Funds

2 Years pge - Partner

If you want a life outside the office, that is fine with us. We encourage lawyers to try and strike a balance between work and the rest of their lives.

We have a clear vision of our objectives and are confident in our strategy for remaining one of the top independent UK corporate law firms. Central to that strategy is a culture where enthusiasm and commitment, rather than a big stick, make us successful. Our enabling culture has made us one of the leading firms in financial services and investment fund work.

We want to recruit enthusiastic lawyers to join Margaret Chamberlain and her team. Whether you are two years pge or a partner, we are offering a real opportunity to join a team at the heart of the firm's strategy for the future. We have a blue chip client base in this area and whether you join as a partner, or with a view to partnership, you will have a real say in the operation of our business.

Look ahead where you are now - can you say the same? Many of our lawyers have joined us from other major city firms and are thriving here. If you want to do quality work in a different environment, come and talk to us.

For further information in complete confidence please contact Adrian Fox or Kate Sutcliffe on 0171-405 6662 (0171-286 1441 or 0956 569203 evenings/weekends) or write to them at Quinary Dougal Recruitment, 37-41 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4EJ. Confidential fax 0171-831 6394.

QD
QUINARY DOUGAL

CHAMBERS

PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT

23 LONG LANE LONDON EC1A 9HL TEL: 0171-606 8844 (FAX: 0171-600 1793)

Non-legal qualifications

During the recession, candidates who have been out of work for some time would not be able to rely on other qualifications they could acquire to improve their position in the job-market. Would an MBA help them, or a Chartered Secretary's qualification? We would not be discouraging. Neither of these qualifications would get them much further. Studying a foreign language might be of marginal assistance for the right job, and the New York Bar qualification could help a little if they wanted to work for an American firm. But by and large, part-time academic qualifications would not repay the time and effort put into them. Previous experience, on the other hand, can be very useful. Candidates who have worked in a company's marketing department before turning to the law would be attractive to many law firms. They would relate well to clients, and their experience could be put to good use. The same would apply to a lawyer who had previously been in banking. Of even greater value is a prior professional qualification as, say, a surveyor, doctor, scientist, or tax accountant. Once you've had a year's experience in the law, such a dual qualification will make you highly marketable for obvious reasons. A one-year qualified solicitor will be able to get a job at the salary usually paid to someone three-years qualified.

Michael Chambers

CHAMBERS' DIRECTORY

Our legal directory is available from Bolas, (01438-710 971)

INDUSTRY Sonya Rayner, Fiona Boxall, Morwenna Lewis, Aileen Shepherd

Russian Speaker: South East
Opportunity for fluent Russian speaker to join legal department of major engineering company. Must have solid commercial experience, sound business acumen and enjoy international travel.

Media: South Coast
Bright, enthusiastic lawyer with general commercial contracts experience required for media company based on the South Coast. A young and friendly team awaits a like minded solicitor with c. 2 years' pge.

Snr. Res. Conv: North & South
We are looking for solicitors who currently head a property department in an established firm and would like to have similar responsibility in a commercial environment.

PRIVATE PRACTICE LONDON: David Woolfson, Simon Anderson
SOUTH: Helen Mills, Noel Murray, Hedley Walsh **NORTH: Suki Bahra, Paul Thomas**

Partnership Positions
We have been assisting partners seeking a career move for over 20 years now and are regularly placing several partners each month.

Property Finance/Banking Partner: City
Leading medium-sized firm, lead adviser to many of the largest property lenders, seeks senior solicitor for department inundated with work.

German Speaking Lawyer: WC2
20 partner commercial firm seeks 0-2 year qualified solicitor to handle UK based insurance related litigation for German clients. Fluent German essential.

Shipping: WC2
Mid-sized commercial firm with established shipping practice seeks 0-2 year qualified assistant to handle varied dry shipping work as part of a small team.

Corporate Insurance: City
One of the biggest names in this field, handling the largest UK and international transactions, offers 2-5 year qualified solicitor work of highest quality.

Financial Services: Central London
Large consultancy requires solicitor c. 3-5 years' pge to join a professional team advising directors on all aspects of their business. Opp to manage own financial services projects and be involved in general company commercial matters.

Corporate Tax: London
Exc opp for solicitor or barrister with at least 1 year's pge in corporate tax to join major accountancy firm to handle international M&A and company reconstructions.

Media lawyer: London
Solicitor with 4-5 years' experience of IP, contentious and non-contentious, to join legal department of well-known media company. Strong negotiating skills and sound business acumen a must.

Insolvency: City
Leading City firm seeks 2-5 year qualified assistant with quality non-contentious insolvency experience to help develop a specialist insolvency group.

Commercial Property: Holborn
Successful medium-sized firm, known for encouraging assistants to build their own following, seeks 1-2 year qualified solicitor for substantial sales and acquisitions.

Senior Corporate Tax: City
Powerful national firm whose London office is fast becoming the firm's centre of gravity offers 5-8 year qualified solicitor excellent partnership prospects.

Construction: Birmingham
We have a number of exciting opportunities for ambitious construction specialists 1-5 yrs' pge to handle contentious/non-contentious work. Truly exceptional packages.

Pensions: Manchester
5-6 year qualified solicitor sought by leading regional firm to handle all aspects of pensions law for major companies. Partnership prospects.

SWEDISH LAWYER

We are seeking a Swedish lawyer with 3 to 5 years experience to work with Swedish partner in London office. You will have strong academic credentials and have spent your time well after obtaining your jur. kand.

Your experience will be in commercial law involving court work. You will be able to work and draft in English, Russian or German fluency preferred but not required.

If you wish to discuss the post or require further information please call:

Per Rasmussen on 0171 321 4477

Kilpatrick Stockton, 68 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5ES.

4-5
GRAY'S
INN
SQUARE

CHAMBERS DIRECTOR

The Chambers of Elizabeth Appleby QC and Michael Beloff QC are one of the leading sets of barristers' Chambers in the country, with fifteen silk and thirty-two juniors and a wide range of high quality work.

An important new position is being created with overall responsibility for the management, development and marketing of the set. The chief functions will be:

- Planning, managing and promoting the strategic development of Chambers and the practices of individual members so that a high quality of service is provided to clients.
- Marketing the services of Chambers
- Heading and being responsible for the whole team of staff, including the clerks, and for the administration of Chambers.

The successful candidate will need:

- Proven managerial, team leadership and marketing skills with high motivation
- The ability to deal with solicitors and other clients at senior levels
- The capacity to develop, and implement strategies to meet the changing requirements of the legal profession.

Relevant experience may have been gained within a solicitors' firm, an in-house legal department or a set of chambers, whether in a practising, managerial or clerking capacity but applications from those with other business or professional background will be welcome.

Salary in the region of £100,000 p.a., to be negotiated.

Please send for Job Description to the Chambers of Miss Elizabeth Appleby QC and Mr Michael Beloff QC, PO Box 17095, London SW15 2WD.

Applications, with full C.V., subsequently to be received by 28 November 1997.

17 OLD BUILDINGS

Lincoln's Inn
London WC2A 3UP

The Chambers of Geoffrey Jaques specialises in Trusts and Property matters.

Applications are invited from practitioners of 6-13 years call to join either team. Applications should be addressed to the Tenancy Committee and will be treated in the strictest confidence.

WESTMINSTER MEDICAL

We are independent medical consultants who provide a comprehensive medical examination and reporting service with prompt and courteous attention.

- MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE CLAIMS
- MEDICAL BENEFIT CLAIMS
- PERSONAL INJURY

Dr A M Saywood, Westminster Medical Ltd
7 The Pastures, Duffield, Derbyshire DE56 4EX
Tel: 01332 840202 Fax 01332 840101

Also at: 10 Harley St., London W1N 1AA. Tel: 0171 932 0012
Centres at: Birmingham, Bridport, Brighton, Colchester, Northampton, Portsmouth and Stoke on Trent.

4 KING'S BENCH WALK Barristers

THE CHAMBERS OF MR PETER HEPPEL QC

4 KING'S BENCH WALK
TEMPLE, LONDON EC4Y 7DL

Are delighted to announce that from October 1st, Mr Robert Rhodes QC, formerly of Littleton Chambers, has accepted an invitation to join Chambers. Members of Chambers are:

Peter Heppel QC	Simon Stafford-Michael
Robert Rhodes QC	David Harcourt
John Toogood	Martin Hurst
Keith Evans	David Stern
Kenneth Cameron	Graham Huston
William Rees	Samuel Jarman
David Cattle	Anne Crossfield
Greville Davis	Nigel Hood
Clive Anderson	Emma Edmon
Bruce Stuart	Paul Bovea
Graham Hulme	Peter Shaw
Margaret Howard	Oliver Miscon
Alison Watts	Yutaka Yawawa
Christopher Van Hagen	Nicola Murphy
Andrew Gordon-Saker	Michael Nelson
Justin Skale	

Senior Clerk: Mr Ian Lee

Tel: 0171 822 8822
Fax: 0171 822 8844
www.barristersatlaw.com
DX: 422 Chancery Lane

un
UNITED
broadcasting &
entertainment

LEGAL BUSINESS AFFAIRS EXECUTIVE

United Broadcasting and Entertainment (UBE) is the television and entertainment division of United News and Media PLC, the international media and information group. UBE is responsible for the group's television and related media interests, including Meridian Broadcasting, Anglia Television and HTV.

UBE's Legal and Business Affairs Department requires an additional lawyer to join its existing team. You will be a 1-2 year qualified lawyer ideally with relevant television production/media experience. As a member of the Legal and Business Affairs Department, you will provide comprehensive legal and commercial support across a wide range of UBE's media activities with the emphasis on programme production.

You must have proven negotiating and drafting skills and the stamina and personality to work well as a member of a busy and hard working department. This position will suit a lawyer seeking an opportunity to build upon and enhance his or her skills within a challenging and rapidly changing television environment.

Applications should be made in writing, enclosing a full CV and quoting reference 446/PDM, to:

Peter Meier, Director of Personnel and Administration,
United Broadcasting and Entertainment Ltd,
Ludgate House, 245 Blackfriars Road,
London SE1 9UY.

The closing date for receipt of applications is 4 November 1997.

United Broadcasting & Entertainment is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

We are in the very first rank of firms for litigation and international arbitration. But we need to recruit top lawyers who will help us maintain these standards and carry on growing our practice.

We have 140 litigators around the world - 25 partners and 70 assistants are in London - and we're expanding. So we're looking for lawyers with between two and five years of post-qualification experience in general commercial litigation or international arbitration. We're after people who want to work hard in a rewarding environment.

If you join us, you'll have the benefit of a stellar UK and international client list, first-rate colleagues, and information and support services that are second to none. There's plenty of interesting work, and we genuinely reckon we're an enjoyable and friendly department to work in.

We also believe in developing your skills - we run inter-firm advocacy courses, and we encourage our lawyers to qualify as solicitor-advocates. We'll make sure you're computer-literate, and we'll supply you with a portable PC and modem to help you get the most from our office systems, even if your work takes you to the other side of the world.

And, needless to say, we offer an excellent City salary and benefits.

If you'd like to know more, call Julie Lekki at Freshfields on 0171 832 7422 or write to her at 65 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1HS (or email jlekk@freshfields.com).



FRESHFIELDS

An opportunity to help build the **World's Premier Law Firm**

Securities Markets Lawyers Global Finance Practices

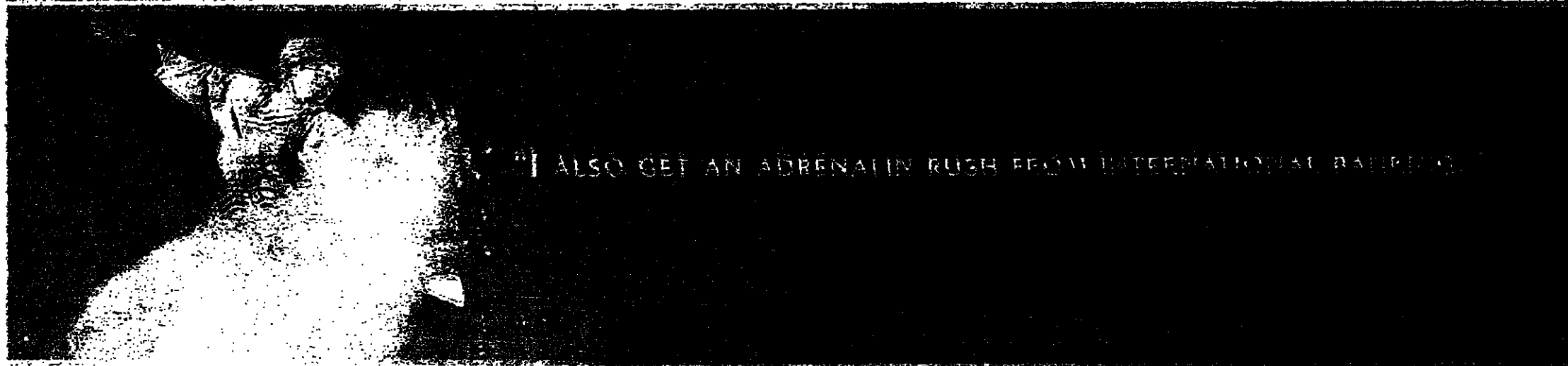
AMSTERDAM
BARCELONA
BRUSSELS
DUBAI
DUSSELDORF
HAMBURG
HONG KONG
LONDON
MADRID
MOSCOW
NEW YORK
PARIS
PRAGUE
SINGAPORE
TOKYO
WARSZAWA
ZURICH

The firm is seeking qualified lawyers with experience in securities, finance, and global finance. You will be part of a team where your skills and experience will be put to use in a dynamic and challenging environment. These positions provide an excellent opportunity for the development of legal skills and professional growth, as well as first class remuneration and benefits. If you are interested in applying, please send your curriculum vitae and a recent photograph to Mrs Pat Shaw, Personnel Manager, 200 Aldgate Square, London E3 9DF. Telephone: 0171 600 1000 Fax: 0171 600 5555.

CLIFFORD CHANCE

For information about the Firm, visit our website:
<http://www.cliffordchance.com>

DENTON HALL



Balance is a very elusive quality in life. Particularly if you're an ambitious **banking lawyer** with much to prove. 1-5 years into your career, you may well think that you have to sacrifice everything for professional success.

Think again. It doesn't have to be like this. At Denton Hall, we believe good lawyers should be interesting, well-rounded individuals. People who enjoy a quality of life. People who can talk intelligently with clients on any subject - not just law. People who see things from a fresh perspective.

We are different from other more conventional City law firms. In a world that is often 'grey', we bring a splash of colour. We have a clear vision of where we are going. We pride ourselves on being more entrepreneurial, more commercial, more willing to take risks. We are

also uniquely supportive - operating in focused project teams where innovation is actively encouraged and everyone enjoys a high profile. You will definitely work closely with senior partners who retain a hands-on involvement from the start to finish of a project. And you are certain to gain a deeper and broader exposure to the most complex projects in international banking.

But make no mistake, we're not offering you a soft option. Our work is intellectually demanding and immensely challenging. To prove the point, just look at some of our latest projects. We were responsible for helping set up a major new retail bank. We've helped global banks move from vanilla lending into areas such as derivatives and structured finance. We've also acted for them on substantial syndicated loans. And recent PFI projects range from eight major road schemes to magistrates' courts, from leading hospitals to national

libraries. And because 70% of our clients are major international names, our work frequently takes on a global perspective.

Last week, for example, one of our young solicitors flew to Russia as well as Southern and Central Africa. Hectic schedules are not unusual. The exceptional fact is that she still had time to go on safari, visit the gym and enjoy two dinner dates. Success in life is a matter of being single-minded, not tunnel-visioned.

If you agree and we have got your adrenalin pumping, let's get together and talk. We're looking for tomorrow's partners today.

To find out more, please contact Joe Macrae or Andrew Caulfield our retained consultants at ZMB on 0171-623 3838 (or 01483 828410 evenings and weekends). ZMB, 37 Sun Street, London EC2M 2PY. Email: andy@zmb.co.uk

DENTON HALL

WHERE LAW IS A PEOPLE BUSINESS

CORPORATE • PROJECT FINANCE • ENERGY • INFRASTRUCTURE • MEDIA • LITIGATION • COMPETITION • TAX • PROPERTY • TECHNOLOGY

CHAMBERS

BANKING & FINANCE

23 LONG LANE LONDON EC1A 9HL TEL: 0171 606 8844 (FAX: 0171 600 1793)

BANKING & FINANCE

International Commercial Bank Corporate Banking

Our client is a major international commercial banking group with a comprehensive network of offices throughout Europe and the US.

A c.3 year qualified solicitor is now required for the London based legal department to provide advice and transactional assistance to the corporate banking business. This role has an unusually broad remit: M&A, securitisation, structured, trade, project and asset finance will all form part. Many transactions have a cross-border (particularly emerging markets) element and candidates with this experience will have an advantage.

Chambers Banking & Finance recruit lawyers into banks and other financial institutions. For further information or for career advice, please ring Deborah Krieman or Stuart Norton on 0171 606 8844. Confidentiality is assured.

US Investment Bank Banking Counsel

A dynamic force in investment banking, our client is a leading US house with a substantial European presence. Situated in London the legal dept has an international role servicing offices in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

A further member is required to expand the existing team to provide transactional advice on a broad range of legal issues. The position will encompass commercial banking matters, structured financing, securities trading and derivative products. Ideal candidates will have 2-6 years' p.q.e. experience of international banking transactions and a flexible approach to a varied and stimulating work load.

Global Investment Bank European Adviser

This integrated investment house is one of the world's premier names in the international markets. The legal department is in the process of preparing the bank on a global basis for European Monetary Union.

It wishes to appoint a legal counsel dedicated to advising traders, management and other attorneys world-wide on this crucial development. This position impacts on all areas of the bank's business encompassing documentation, clearing/custody arrangements, membership of industry bodies, etc. An in-depth understanding of EMU, exposure to the markets and c.1 year's p.q.e. will be essential.

c. \$A250,000 package

Leading Australian
Law Firm

Australia

Partner/Partner Potential

Unprecedented growth has created demand for partner level lawyers in one of Australia's leading law firms with over 150 partners. Predominantly commercial in nature the firm's reputation is built on the calibre and professionalism of client service and advice. A broad and distinctive client base includes some of Australia's largest listed companies, international corporations and government agencies. Wide ranging opportunities in a professional and entrepreneurial environment offer excellent rewards and career potential.

THE FIRM

- Full service commercial firm offering a flexible system of major project groups and client teams combining appropriate expertise from Banking and Finance, Corporate and Commercial, Intellectual Property and Communications, IT, Legal Technology and Litigation.
- Truly national partnership with opportunities to join offices in Brisbane, Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne or Perth. Strong emphasis on growth in Asia with presence in Indonesia and China and Papua New Guinea.
- Professional management with clearly defined corporate strategies and superior systems has made the firm one of the most profitable in Australia.

THE BENEFITS

- Equity partnership available within two years subject to performance. Equitable profit share across the full partnership regardless of location or specialisation. Particular opportunities for Oil & Gas, Hard Rock Resources, as well as most other practice areas.
- Sponsorship available for suitably qualified lawyers wishing to migrate to Australia. An attractive lifestyle with a good balance between work and leisure in a most personable and impenetrable team culture.
- Satisfaction and professional growth from working in a firm dedicated to leading edge technology and professional support. Growth in stature, knowledge and rewards can be expected.

Tel: +61 2 9247 4081
Fax: +61 2 9281 3021

Email: MK@chambers.com.au

Selector Pacific
Spencer Stuart

Please reply with full details to:
Mrs Henderson, Selector Pacific,
Level 10, 200, Gloucester Place,
New York, Australia

EXHIBIT CALL
1800 6111

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

AGSWIFT 20

BRIEFINGS

The Institute of Directors has produced a booklet, *Managing your messages effectively*, to help key staff to cope with the volume of phone calls, faxes, messages and e-mails they receive. It costs £8. Call the IoD books department on 0171-451 0060.

□ NatWest Bank has produced a guide to the millennium computer time bomb, with a checklist on guarding against computers crashing if they cannot cope with the year change to 2000. It costs £7, but NatWest customers pay only £2 postage and package. Contact your local branch.

□ BT is offering a reduced connection charge of £49.50 plus value-added tax, half the usual cost, for businesses taking a second exchange line by the end of December.

□ Innovation 2000 Open Day, organised by the Kent Technology Transfer Centre, will be at Chatham Maritime Observatory on October 23. Seminars will cover funding, design, intellectual property and marketing. Call 01227 763414.

□ AEA has introduced a scheme offering management, manufacturing and financial assistance to small businesses with innovative technological ideas that they wish to commercialise. AEA, of Harwell, Berkshire, will enter licensing or joint venture deals on projects that it supports. Call 01235 432013.

□ Business Connect is holding its first national conference at Llandudnod Wells, Powys, tomorrow.

□ The Telework World 97 conference, part of European Telework Week, will be held at the Britannia Hotel, London Docklands, from November 5 to 7. The themes will be business use of information technology, business management in the IT age, and choice of property in the light of teleworking.



"I was made redundant by self-assessment"

Widget Finn on the origins, careful planning and enduring success of Enterprise Europe

Charity links small firms to Eastern entrepreneurs

IN THOSE dramatic days of 1990 when the Berlin Wall came down and former Iron Curtain countries were moving towards democracy, a small group of young British business people planned a positive contribution to the new spirit of enterprise that was emerging in Eastern and Central Europe.

Many more ambitious schemes have since sunk without trace, but Enterprise Europe goes from strength to strength. The registered charity provides practical business placements in small and medium-sized UK companies for young entrepreneurs from Eastern and Central Europe. It has more than 100 placements to its credit, resulting in two company start-ups and four joint ventures, with others in the pipeline.

The scheme aims to bring benefits to the host company and the entrepreneur. Among the many success stories is the experience of Armorex, a specialist flooring manufacturer in Suffolk. In 1993 the company played host to Jan Svab, a young entrepreneur from the Czech Republic, who returned home to Brno to set up an Armorex distributor and is now its number one distributor worldwide.

The founders of Enterprise Europe were determined to set it up on a sound basis. Neil Sherlock, one of the original group and now director of communications for KPMG, said: "Colin Sharman, then UK senior partner at KPMG, was very supportive, advising on an organisational structure which would be professional and credible," he said.

Enterprise Europe assembled an impressive list of patrons — John Smith, and Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, Lord Owen and Lord Howe of Aberavon. The organisation was launched at a fundraising dinner in 1990, hosted by Lord Howe, who had been Foreign Secretary during the period when democracy was developing in Eastern European countries.

For the first nine months Enterprise Europe was run by its 14 founders voluntarily in their spare time. All in their mid-twenties, they worked in business, the media, politics and management consultancy, and used their contacts to



The fall of the Berlin Wall helped to lift the spirit of free enterprise in Eastern Europe

establish links with suitable organisations and to raise funds to sponsor a full-time organiser. The group targeted counterparts in Hungary, Poland and the then Czechoslovakia, Russia, Ukraine and Georgia have recently been added to the list.

Pippa Markus, a founder and Enterprise Europe's director and sole employee for the first five years, recalls EE's first placement.

"When Roman Dubravsky arrived from Bratislava we were both equally nervous because months of careful planning were finally put to the test," she said. "Six years on, Roman heads his own successful company in Bratislava and his host company, Onduline, operates in Central Europe and Russia as a result of its EE contacts."

Ms Markus added: "Large organisations have the resources to pursue overseas marketing, but smaller companies, which are often very keen, lack the experience and the funds. They need a helping hand to make contacts and establish

relationships for export business. We also focused on the small business sector because many of the entrepreneurs planned to set up their own business. Working for large organisations was a tremendous experience, but didn't have direct relevance."

There are no costs for the host company. Funding comes from the EU, the British Government's Know-How Fund, the Thatcher Foundation and corporate supporters such as Marks & Spencer, which arranged early placements

with its sub-contractors. Enterprise Europe handles all the details, including the trainee's travel and accommodation arrangements and provides support and advice for trainee and host.

Ms Markus sees EE's role as matchmaker and hand-holder. She said: "We can meet everyone in a small company and get a clear idea of how the trainee will fit in. Often the host company will need reassurance because it's a big step to take on someone from a totally different business culture."

Neil Lewis, managing director of Lloyd Lewis World Trade, which is playing host to its third EE trainee, has no doubts about the benefits. He said: "Any small business should grab the chance with both hands. There's no way that my company could afford a speculative foray into Eastern European markets, but Enterprise Europe offers a fantastic opportunity — and when it works, it really pays off."

□ Enterprise Europe: 0171-407 1120

Prague venture proves scheme is two-way street

WHEN Pavel Nyc, from Prague, spent ten days with Oyster Books, of Badgeworth, Somerset, he helped Timothy Wood, the managing director, to set up a new database that has revolutionised the company's systems.

Mr Wood said: "Pavel came through Enterprise Europe to find out about publishing in the UK, but we also learnt a lot from him. He is a computer whiz-kid whose own company runs on interlinked databases. He introduced new ideas into our company about how we can organise the business."

Mr Wood heard of the Enterprise Europe scheme through his local Business Link. He specified a placement who was young and energetic with a similar business background. Mr Nyc was suggested, and the pair met at the Frankfurt Book Fair. They got on well immediately.

Mr Wood said: "Enterprise Europe helped us to put together a timetable for Pavel's visit, which helped to focus our minds on priorities. We arranged for him to meet British publishers, and swapped customer names and suppliers."

Both men wrote letters in their own languages to introduce the other's company to publishers and, as a result, Mr Wood plans to visit the Prague and Warsaw book fairs.

Mr Nyc learnt valuable lessons from his visit. "I realised that my organisation was well up with

Western companies in the use of computer technology, which gave me confidence," he said. "I now appreciate the importance of international sales. Oyster Books do a lot of export business and they gave me valuable coaching in how to sell to Western markets."

Lloyd Lewis World Trade, an import-export business based in Hampshire, also got some immediate benefits through the Enterprise Europe scheme. During Andrei Yurov's 1996 placement, Lloyd Lewis sent its first container of foodstuffs to his company in St Petersburg, and now trade between the two is flourishing.

Neil Lewis, of Lloyd Lewis, said: "Andrei is now our man on the spot. It has opened his eyes to the difficult conditions for anyone doing business in that country. I saw the hardships that people like Andrei are operating under and their constant fight against corruption. Small businesses are on their own — there's no equivalent of the DTI or export advice offices."

Mr Lewis advises employers to plan a placement carefully, to make the most of it. "I sent Andrei a suggested timetable in advance so that we could tailor-make visits to warehouses which would be of interest to him," he said.

Mr Lewis believes it is important to have a clear objective for an EE placement. "Both sides want business out of the placement," he said.



From left, Pavel Nyc and the Oyster Books team Donna Webber, sales manager, and Jenny and Timothy Wood, joint managing directors

TO ADVERTISE CALL
0171 680 6111

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

FAX:
0171 782 7930

TAGSWIFT 200MMX

TAGSWIFT M2 200MMX

- Celeron 300MHz Processor with 64MB cache
- 64MB EDO RAM
- 3.1Gb Super Fast IDE Hard Drive
- 15" FST SVGA Monitor
- 33.6K BAST Approved Voice & Data Fax Modem
- 4MB 3D Graphics Card
- 2 Year Warranty

£895

LOTUS SMARTSUITE 97

Includes Lotus 1-2-3, WordPro, Approach, Freelance, Graphics, Organizer & ScreenCam

64Mb EDO RAM **3.1Gb SUPERFAST HARD DRIVE** **15" FST SVGA MONITOR** **33.6K VOICE FAX MODEM** **4Mb 3D GRAPHICS CARD**

56.6K BAST APPROVED Voice & Data Fax Modem Upgrade £29 + VAT

Buy Now and Pay April 1998

0% APR

Under £50 PER MONTH

19.9% APR

TAG OPTION 1

£89

Includes: Packard 4000, Colour Inkjet Printer, 4000, Colour Inkjet, Printer only £49, 4000, Colour Inkjet, Printer only £49, 4000, Colour Inkjet, Printer only £49

TAG OPTION 2

£149

Includes: Global Video Conference System, 4000, Colour Inkjet, Printer only £49, 4000, Colour Inkjet, Printer only £49, 4000, Colour Inkjet, Printer only £49

TAG OPTION 3

£220

Includes: Global Video Conference System, 4000, Colour Inkjet, Printer only £49, 4000, Colour Inkjet, Printer only £49, 4000, Colour Inkjet, Printer only £49

The Solution is a phone call away

0181 803 7770

or 07000 TAGPCS (07000 824727)

tag PC

GENERAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

ASSEMBLY Simple & proven home based business. No experience necessary. £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

HOME BASED BUSINESS No experience necessary. £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

NOTICE TO READERS

Whilst we take reasonable precautions with all advertisements, readers are strongly advised to take professional advice before paying a deposit or entering into any financial commitment.

BUSINESS FOR SALE

ACTON Bar, nightclub in Acton, London. £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

ACTON Bar, nightclub in Acton, London. £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

ARMOURY Looking for... £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

ARMOURY Looking for... £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

IDEA OR INVENTION?

IDEA OR INVENTION? £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

IDEA OR INVENTION? £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

CONSIDERING A CAREER IN EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT?

CONSIDERING A CAREER IN EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT? £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

CONSIDERING A CAREER IN EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT? £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

BUSINESS SERVICES

BUSINESS SERVICES £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

BUSINESS SERVICES £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

FRANCHISES

FRANCHISES £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

FRANCHISES £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

LOANS & INVESTMENT

LOANS & INVESTMENT £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

LOANS & INVESTMENT £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

You've planned your new business. Now write your business plan.

You've planned your new business. Now write your business plan. £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

You've planned your new business. Now write your business plan. £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

Page 18 shows you how.

Page 18 shows you how. £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

Page 18 shows you how. £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

Call 0800 777 888

Call 0800 777 888 £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

Call 0800 777 888 £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms

Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.

Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms £10,000 investment. Call 01222 555 555.



NatWest

More than just a bank

National Westminster Bank Plc, 41 Lombard, London EC2P 2BP. Calls with NatWest may be monitored/recorded to maintain and improve our service.

Villa hope Collymore can unlace Basques

FROM RUSSELL KEMPSON
IN BILBAO

WHOOFS of mock bravado filled the air as the plane carrying the Aston Villa players rolled alarmingly from side to side, buffeted by high winds, on its approach into Legados airport here yesterday. It was not the best experience to have to endure on the eve of their Uefa Cup second-round first-leg tie against Athletic Bilbao tonight.

Whether the players will exhibit such high spirits during take-off from Legados in the early hours of Wednesday morning is a moot point. If their domestic form lines count for anything in the raucous atmosphere of European combat, Villa may be offering up some silent prayers — as many of them probably did, privately, yesterday — for the second leg.

Since beating Bordeaux in the first round, Villa have only a 1-0 win against Bolton Wanderers to their credit. On the debit side, dismal defeats against West Ham United in the Coca-Cola Cup and Wimbledon in the FA Carling Premiership bode nothing but ill.

Under normal circumstances, the return of Stan Collymore, from Premiership suspension, would be enough to lift morale. At his bewitching best, few defences can cope as he stalks his way through with arrogance and ease. Bilbao should perhaps beware.

However, Collymore is one of the game's great unpredictables, one who inspires and infuriates in equal measure. Brian Little, the Villa manager, can only hope it is the more earnest, hard-working side of the England striker's nature that is exhibited in the compact and intimidating San Mames stadium.

One goal in 13 matches this season is no sort of return for a £7 million investment but Little remains optimistic. "He's missed a few chances, which doesn't help, and I suppose he could have had a goal in every other game," Little said. "We keep encouraging him to get in goalscoring positions and I'm sure it's only a matter of time before he gets going."

"He wants to do well, you can see that, and we keep talking to him, quietly. Unfortunately, it's always the high profile players who attract the criticism when things aren't going too well."

Collymore's European record is none too impressive, either. In three starts for Liverpool, his former club, and two against Bordeaux, he has yet to open his account. It is also likely that he will receive only limited service this evening as Little concentrates on containment rather than entertainment.

Bilbao at least offered reminders of home yesterday as heavy drizzle fell on the northern Basque coast, the weather trying its best to dim the splendours of the newly-opened Guggenheim Museum.

Around the turn of the century, Athletic Club de Bilbao was founded by itinerant foundry workers and mining engineers from the northeast of England.

The present-day players, struggling in the Spanish League, still wear the red and white stripes of Sunderland. Villa, perhaps, can only hope that they play like them.

ASTON VILLA (probable): M. Bowen; U. Eborog; S. Shotton; G. Southgate; F. Nelson; M. Draper; S. Cooper; I. Taylor; S. Grayson; A. Wright; D. York; S. Coleman.
ATHLETIC BILBAO (probable): I. Etxebarria; R. Rios; C. Garcia; R. Añorbe; L. Llorente; U. Urbe; B. Zizac; J. Llorente; J. Gonzalez; J. Etxebarria; A. Zigorra.

Matt Dickinson finds another side to Old Trafford's Mr Angry



Schmeichel's physique and reputation are intimidating, but the private world of the Manchester United goalkeeper is in stark contrast to his image

Schmeichel allows the mask to slip

A habit of thrusting his crimson face nose-to-nose with players and letting rip with a blast of abusive hot air earned Alex Ferguson the dressing-room nickname — albeit one muttered quietly in his presence — of The Hairdryer. It could just as easily have been given to Peter Schmeichel, a man also given to frank airing of his thoughts, as dozens of team-mates, opponents and officials can testify. Such openness is something that the Manchester United goalkeeper is more reluctant to pursue away from the game; a private man who has grown understandably suspicious since the Ian Wright affair, of which he will never speak publicly, content that those close to him know of his innocence. Perhaps he should be more forthcoming, because he is a thoughtful, reflective individual, far removed from his "big, loud and wild" image. The big bit, of course, he cannot help, and nor would he want to, his 6ft 4in, 16-stone frame being capable of intimidating a heavyweight boxer, never mind an onrushing centre forward.

The wildness also comes naturally, proof of the competitive desire that made him an obvious

candidate for the United captaincy as soon as Roy Keane was ruled out for the season. It is also, he admits, a front born of convenience, a mask designed to keep distance between professional and family existence at a club where, like no other, private lives are very much deemed public property.

"People see me as a big, loud character," the Dane said, "and it suits me to have it that way because in my private life I am completely different. It helps to keep the two things separated. There is nothing of interest for anyone in my private world and I want it to stay like that."

Schmeichel does himself a disservice. There is much about him that intrigues, not least a passion for music inherited from his father, a professional musician in Denmark. Try to imagine Schmeichel in a band and the mind stretches no further than a set of drums, thrashing out his frustrations in a crash of cymbals and whirl of broken sticks. He talks, though, of preparing for the high-intensity matches that he so relishes by turning his giant hands to a Beethoven piano sonata. "I use music to relax so I try and play a

bit on the piano before every game," Schmeichel, who will no doubt be toying with a few tunes before the European Cup Champions' League match against Feyenoord tomorrow, said.

"I try and choose pieces out of my league. I can read a little bit of score and I try and pick something I really have to concentrate on to take my mind off the game ahead. Anything from Billy Joel to classical." One of his own compositions,

'People see me as big and loud and it suits me that way'

an unofficial song for Euro 96, briefly flirted with the Danish charts. *We Can Do It Again* will no doubt be the theme in the United dressing-room at Old Trafford as they prepare to cement their position as leaders of group B after victories over Kosice and, so memorably, Juventus.

"That was a great performance, a real highlight of my career here," Schmeichel said. Temporary captain that evening, he is now confirmed in the job until Keane's knee recovers from a cruciate ligament operation. "We had

people like Phil Neville coming in, seemingly aged about 12, playing out of position in midfield against one of the biggest clubs in the world. But he played superbly, just as every one of the lads did."

"It was a fantastic night for us all, but we know it means nothing if we do not build on it, nothing if we fail to win against Feyenoord, and then the next game and then the next one after that." They are words that could have been spoken by the manager himself and sentiments that drive to the core of what has made United the country's leading club by some distance since Schmeichel arrived in

1991 for a ridiculously cheap £650,000 fee. The morning after the Juventus triumph, the captain and his team-mates arrived bright-eyed at The Cliff training ground, already preparing for the next challenge. Schmeichel is a notorious perfectionist. Furious if he is beaten even in training, players in the Denmark squad draw straws to find out who has to provide shooting practice, knowing that they will be out on the field until the sun goes down. Such self-imposed standards have already brought con-

siderable rewards, including four championship titles, two FA Cups, a League Cup and the European championship in Sweden in 1992. Schmeichel sees no end to it. Thirty-four next month, he has agreed a four-year extension to his contract. There is, he said, no other club that could fulfil him, and while he admits there was talk of moving on last summer, it had nothing to do with football.

"We had a few months when we spent a lot of time thinking whether we should leave England," Schmeichel, a father of two, said. "We have a boy who is 11 and we had to decide if he was going to be brought up here or to let him finish his education in Denmark. The manager came to see me and the club gave me some enormous support which helped us to stay."

"By the time the contract is finished, I will have done ten years here. I will become another forgotten player, just like Eric Cantona. Gary Neville once said this is a cynical club and it is true. Great players like Bryan Robson, Steve Bruce and Mark Hughes come through and then they disappear. The fans remember them, but life goes on. It is tough, but it is what makes this club successful. I would not expect any different."

Liverpool must heed Wenger's warnings

FROM MATT DICKINSON
IN STRASBOURG

LIVERPOOL'S players endured a turbulent flight to Strasbourg yesterday and there are plenty of reasons why their Uefa Cup journey this season may remain a bumpy one.

Warning signs abounded for Roy Evans and his team before they ventured into tonight's second-round first-leg tie, but that should at least ensure no repeat of the complacency that encouraged the humiliation suffered when the club last visited France. Paris last spring saw Evans reach his nadir as manager at Anfield, a 3-0 defeat by Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of the Cup Winners' Cup semi-final exposing deep flaws in the team's application and resilience.

The French, shocked by how awful Liverpool were that night, remember the game well and will have been buoyed by renewed signs of frailty against Everton on Saturday.

Of course, Paul Ince, who celebrates his thirtieth birthday today, was not present in Paris, but while the England captain has undoubtedly added much needed dynamism in midfield since his transfer from Internazionale, the area of doubt has simply shifted elsewhere — to the defence.

The Liverpool rearguard were turned inside out by Cadamarteri, Everton's teenage forward, and Bjorn Kvanne could lose his place, with Mark Wright returning from injury to provide more cover for David James, who has plenty to prove to the French public. At least Strasbourg, taken over by Mark McCormack's IMG in the summer, should not surprise Evans tactically.

He has been extensively briefed by Glasgow Rangers, beaten in both games by Strasbourg in the previous round — added evidence that this is no easy fixture. After a poor start, Strasbourg have started to climb the French League and they are highly rated by their former manager, Arsene Wenger, now in charge of Arsenal, who still owns a house in the area.

"Liverpool must be very wary because this is a team with excellent support and they can cause them a lot of problems on their own ground," Wenger said. "It is a very, very similar draw to the one we had against PAOK Salonika. You are looking at a team with the potential to finish in mid-table in the Premiership, but one which can hurt you over two games."

"They are very strong in attack, particularly through David Zvelli, who is a noted specialist in dead-ball situations. Their defence has been strengthened by two Czech internationals, Jan Suchoparek, an excellent defender, and Alex Wengle, a fine goalkeeper."

Liverpool's chances have not been helped by an Achilles tendon injury to Patrik Berger and a groin strain suffered by Karlheinz Riedle, both players have stayed at home for treatment.

Evans will be forced into changes and is likely to turn to youth. Michael Owen, 17, could start alongside Robbie Fowler, and Danny Murphy, 20, may return to the team in midfield. Jamie Redknapp travelled with the squad, but Evans implied that he may not have recovered sufficient match fitness.

LIVERPOOL (probable): D. James; J. McKeever, N. Ruddock, M. Wright, S. Blomqvist, R. Murphy, P. Ince, M. Thomas, S. McManaman, R. Owen.



Wenger: domestic warning

Arsenal manager forecasts European union

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

ARSENE WENGER believes that a European Super League will become reality "in the next three or four years". The Arsenal manager said that the pressure from television companies across the continent will be too much to withstand and that Uefa, the sport's European governing body, will enlarge the Champions' League.

However, Wenger warned that

domestic competitions will suffer if the leading clubs establish their own cartel to run a European competition. And he suggested that he was unconcerned by Arsenal's early European exit this season, because the Uefa Cup is now just "a consolation competition".

Wenger said: "The European League is getting nearer and nearer. Now they've organised the Champions' League into six groups of four, but the natural thing would

have been four groups of six, with the best two in each group going through."

"They didn't want to do that, because it would mean too many games — ten games in the group is the equivalent of a small championship. But it will be the next stage — because television wants it, television means money, and television means the game."

Samassi Abou is expected to undergo a medical at Upton Park,

later this week before completing a £400,000 move to West Ham United. Abou, 24, a France Under-21 striker, has been playing for Cannes and had a trial with West Ham last week.

Per Pedersen, the Blackburn Rovers forward, is set to go on loan to Borussia Monchengladbach. Pedersen has had talks with the German club and expects to sign a deal that will keep him in the country until the end of the season.

ATHLETICS

Sutton may not defend title

FROM DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT, IN CHICAGO

WHEN Carey Pinkowski, the Chicago Marathon race director, said he was looking forward to seeing Marian Sutton achieve next year something no man or woman has managed in the 21-year history of the event — a third victory — he may have been overlooking one thing. Sutton is not certain to return.

Sutton won here for the second successive year on Sunday and is the only Briton holding a marathon title from

one of the main, commercial big-city races. Aged 34, she has long held the ambition to run in the four leading international championships. She has appeared in world and European championships: the Commonwealth Games and Olympics remain.

If she contests the Commonwealth marathon next year in Kuala Lumpur, that will rule her out of the Chicago race a month later. "I would like to do the Commonwealth

Games, although I am not so sure I would like to do a marathon in Kuala Lumpur," Sutton said. "I will go home and think about it." The 10,000 metres might be an option, followed by the Chicago event. Several questions need answering. Which marathons will she run next year? Should she give up work as a solicitor's secretary, or at least reduce her four-day week, to advance her training? Why is she prone to nosebleeds, one of which developed here for the first time during a race?

Sutton, whose salary is less than half her \$54,000 (around £33,000) winnings here, said: "I do not earn a great salary. Maybe I am being silly not giving it up but I like the contrast. I go to work and do not think about running but something will have to change." With more planning, she believes she can go "quite a bit quicker" than the personal best 2hr 29min 03sec that she ran on Sunday.

Paul Evans, who lost his Chicago title, finishing sixth, will not attempt to regain it next year. He enjoys a six-figure annual income from commercial marathons and has not run a championship marathon since 1993. Now he is aiming for the European title in Budapest next summer. "I have earned a bit of money and been sensible with it, but one thing I have not got is a medal," Evans said.

Practice that may help make perfect

IF HIGH-PROFILE preparation counted for anything Janice Moodie and Mhairi McKay, the talented Scots, would coast through the US LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association) Tour's final qualifying tournament, which starts today at Daytona Beach in Florida (Patricia Davies writes).

Moodie and McKay, seasoned internationals but novice professionals, tuned up for 72 holes of tension by practising with Tiger Woods — one of McKay's contemporaries at Stanford — and Mark O'Meara.

Today, more prosaically, they join 18 other Europeans among more than 100 other hopefuls attempting to earn their card for next season.

GOLF: STROKE OF LUCK WINS REGIONAL FINAL OF CORPORATE CHALLENGE

Slade ends on high note for Opus

By MEL WEBB

IT WAS a shot in a million, the sort that professionals dream of and amateurs dare not even imagine. It came as a complete surprise to the man who hit it, but it was a very pleasant surprise, for it won the competition for his team.

The hole was the 9th at Stoke Poges, the competition the Western Home Counties regional final of The Times/MessPierson Corporate Golf Challenge, the player Bill Slade, playing for Opus 4 Integrated Limited, a Woking-based firm specialising in corporate real estate and facilities management.

The hole was the eighteenth that Slade and James Devane, his partner, had played. They did not know it at the time, but they needed to score well to



give their team any chance of victory. Nobody, least of all the two men themselves, expected them to play it anywhere near as well as they did.

The hole is a long par-four measuring 459 yards, but it was playing a good deal longer than that in the inhospitably windy conditions. Devane played it well enough, hitting a drive and a flying three-wood that went through

the green, then stroked a sand wedge back to ten feet, from where he made the putt for a net birdie and three Stableford points.

So far, so good, but it was but the overture to Slade's big number. Left 120 yards from the pin in two, he drew out his seven-iron and, with the ball a good foot below his feet, hit it slightly thin.

It was going at a rate of knots when it arrived at the green, but Slade's glimmerings of horror were assuaged when the ball hit the pin, took a look at the hole and dropped in for a birdie, net eagle, four points; lovely. It was as well that the pin got in the way — if it had not, then the ball was heading for the next county.

So, Slade and Devane scored seven points on the hole. It was just as well as the

other two players in the team, Colin Buckley and Peter Tubb, had gathered only two there. On the other hand, Buckley and Tubb garnered six points on the 10th, and their team-mates scored a fat zero.

It gave Opus 4 victory with 82 points, one ahead of Manistow Limited, with Data Connection Limited a further point behind. It was a proud victory, but it was one that would never have happened but for Slade's golden, final shot of the day.

RESULTS: 88 Opus 4 Integrated Ltd. 81; Manistow Ltd. 76; Data Connection Ltd. 75; Commercial Union Financial Print. 75; BP Oil UK Ltd. 74; Beyer plc. 74; Gerald Ltd. 74; Seabed Ltd. 74; Ebnah Ltd. 74; General Telecom. The Hargreaves Co (G) Ltd. 72; AC Lloyd (Buckingham) Ltd. 70; The 9th Ltd. 70; Status Group. Surrey Medical. Tara Laval. 68; Dabys Solicitors. Transworld. Assoc. Management. 68; Alfa Instruments & Controls Ltd. 68; Brierley Veterinary Centre. Worcester. 68; POFM Ltd. No return. 68; Berkshire Independent Hospital. Savills International Property Consultants.

HOW SPORT WHAT'S ON RUN KNOWLEDGE MONEY SHOPPING TAKE INTEREST

"How fat a profit have I made on my shares this morning?"

LineOne, the information and internet service, can tell you at the touch of a button whether to pick up a paracetamol or have a banana. Its share portfolio tracker is updated every 20 minutes, and there's no need to wade through stacks of prices you don't want.

Try LineOne and the internet FREE. Call 0800 111 210.

www.lineone.net

It's what you want to know

After your first trial LineOne is available from £10 to £4.95 per month

FREE £10 BET

FOR FIRST TIME TELEPHONE CALLERS staking £25 or more using Switch or Delta bank or building society debit cards

RING TODAY 0800 44 40 40

(Minimum total investment per call £25. Over 18's only.)

"Free bet is a £10 Correct Score bet on tonight's Strasbourg v Liverpool match. (Please place your bet and make your free bet selection within the same call.)"

William Hill

7/4 STRASBOURG 11/5 DRAW LIVERPOOL 5/4

Meistris Stadium, Kick-off 8.00pm, Live on BBC TV

CORRECT SCORE	DOUBLE RESULT	1ST LIVERPOOL SCORER
6/1 1-0 11/2	STRASBOURG, STRASBOURG 4/1	4/1 FOWLER
11/1 2-0 9/1	STRASBOURG, DRAW 14/1	11/2 BERGER
10/1 2-1 8/1	STRASBOURG, LIVERPOOL 25/1	6/1 BERGER
28/1 3-0 20/1	DRAW, STRASBOURG 11/2	10/1 MCNAMAMAN
25/1 3-1 18/1	DRAW, DRAW 4/1	12/1 INCE
33/1 3-2 33/1	DRAW, LIVERPOOL 5/1	14/1 THOMAS
11/2 0-0 11/2	LIVERPOOL, STRASBOURG 28/1	20/1 MCATEER
5/1 1-1 5/1	LIVERPOOL, DRAW 14/1	6/4 NO LIVERPOOL SCORER
18/1 2-2 18/1	LIVERPOOL, LIVERPOOL 11/4	

Other players in register. Ovals indicate no return. **LATEST ODDS ON WEBSITE WWW.TVTEXT** • Teletext on CH4 951/952/953

PRICES SUBJECT TO FLUCTUATION WILLIAM HILL FOOTBALL RULES APPLY. TO OPEN A CREDIT ACCOUNT TELEPHONE 0800 280 282

Edwards on crest of wave

The truth, the whole truth and nothing but?

Before settling down to *The Phil Spector Show*, watch the devious Sergeant Bilko demonstrating again that it's not so much which rules you break that define you, as how you break them, we all took notes as Fergal Keane gave the Haw Wheldon Memorial Lecture (BBC2 on *The Art Of The Reporter*).

Keane, the BBC's eloquent Asia correspondent, is against flashy, look-at-me journalism the way the Pope is against sin. "Truth-telling - artful, fearless and intelligent - that's something that Keane feels must be protected from the arrival of 24-hour electronic news in general, and of the rumour-filled Internet in particular, which he worries might devalue the foreign correspondent's role. "What a pity," he says, "if technology, far from pushing us into another Age of Enlightenment, was to return us to the rumour-ridden gloom of the Middle Ages."

So that's why Keane urges us to resist the temptation to be drawn into the Oliver Stone school of fiction - myth and history, truth and distortion, mixed into one dubious lump of sludge. The sort of reports he treasures are John Simpson's from Afghanistan, or Charles Wheeler's from the Georgian massacre, or Martin Bell's from Bosnia, or Sue Lloyd Roberts's from Burma. Me too.

But wait a sec: Oliver Stone is not a reporter, he's a filmmaker. And doesn't Keane's anxiety about the trivialisation of news by novel electronic media echo the early fears of Fleet Street print journalists, who thought that television's arrival would inevitably turn all news into bite-sized McGuffins?

Many newspaper journalists might still argue that even the BBC - which has more resources, and is (a teensy bit) less ratings-obsessed than its news rivals - offers a poor alternative to newspa-

pers when it comes to offering a fullish picture of, say, Algerian fundamentalism or Martin Amis's dental work. For one thing, television news tends to be excited by a story's newsworthy value, if there is a camera handy to film it. Without pictures, the news producer back in London rarely has much appetite for a story, however important.

Still, someone has to paint the Pimms line and Keane is a fitter man than many. "The talented correspondent," he says, "must resist the celeb-driven nonsense, the wretched preoccupation with looks and image which infects so much of American television journalism." Of course he should. "Still worse is the prospect of the untalented and sub-literate being elevated to journalistic stardom because they're deemed suitably telegraphic - in other words, the beautiful airhead syndrome." No names mentioned. "I don't have any fears

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

of this happening at the BBC." This was presumably ironic, though the audience didn't laugh. But Pimms line are one thing and staying aloof is another. However noble a reporter's search for truth might be, deadlines force journalists to make the best of what they have: everyone can file a better story in two hours' time, but by then it will miss the paper or the news bulletin. This fact of life gives

rise to a curious paradox: when the journalist speeding to a deadline is a beautiful airhead, viewers might (unfairly?) nurse doubts about it; but when the correspondent is someone whose talent viewers trust - Keane, say, or Wheeler - they are minded to believe that what they have just seen or heard is the full picture. And any smart journalist knows that he is as likely to have got that as he is a free lunch from Peter Mandelson.

The problems that can arise when we trust that what we are seeing is all there is to see were highlighted in *Making Masterpieces* (BBC2), when Neil MacGregor, director of the National Gallery in London, put Veronese's *The Vision of St Helena* under the microscope. I've never thought twice about the colours in this painting, but they bother MacGregor. According to legend, St Helena discovered the cross on which Christ was crucified. Ver-

onese shows her having a vision of that cross, carried by angels. But, says MacGregor: "She had the vision of the sunny Mediterranean. So why do we see her now against a chilly grey sky that looks much more appropriate to the East Coast of Scotland?"

After infra-red analysis, MacGregor finds that Veronese actually painted the sky a warming blue in the 16th century. But he used smalt, a cheap pigment, which has discoloured to a muddy grey. MacGregor explains that "there is nothing that we can now do to recover the blue that Veronese once painted. We simply have to live with the picture as it now is, knowing that it is no longer true to Veronese's intentions. A picture like the *St Helena* reminds us that every painting is really a dialogue between the artist and his materials. If those materials are unstable, or

change, then what it communicates will be distorted - often in ways that he could not have foreseen. The materials will determine how accurately we can now receive his meaning." MacGregor sounds as though he has the makings of a diligent foreign correspondent.

Curiously, the one artist whose intentions are not always clear in his Surrealist paintings seems to have been a rather more direct communicator in real life. In *Ombudsman: The Fame and Shame Of Salvador Dali* (BBC1), Dali's friend Maria Luisa Gonzalez recalled Dali's response when his conservative father flipped at the sight of Dali and his chums swimming starkers in Cadaques. Dali replied: "My friends are not depraved and look, I'll give you what I owe you," and he took a bag filled with sperm and sent it to his father. "Any reaction?" His father was incredibly angry. "Now that is something I can believe."

- 6.00am Business Breakfast** (43808)
6.30am BBC Breakfast News (T) (82418247)
9.05am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (T) (3586131)
9.30am Style Challenge (8774781)
9.55am Killy (4258268)
10.35am Change That In Harrogate (8025228)
11.00am News (T) and weather (7407824)
11.05am The Really Useful Show (T) (7430150)
11.35am Room for Improvement A house containing Ireland's smallest church, ash windows (T) (3449421)
12.00am News (T) and weather (8080773)
12.05pm Call My Bluff (7533150)
12.35am Going for a Bang Russian artefacts and royal artworks (8235711)
1.00am News (T) and weather (47315)
1.30am Regional News and weather (7336459)
1.40am The Weather Show (5058722)
1.45am Neighbours (T) (7109371)
2.10am Quilley A young girl brought into hospital after a road accident dies in mysterious circumstances (T) (8022957)
3.00am Through the Keyhole (T) (1274334)
3.25am The Really Useful Show: Update (424150)
3.30am Playdays (7642563) 3.55 *Arthur* (8725044) 4.15 *Fudge* (8982228) 4.35 *The Queen's Nose* (851402) 5.00 *Newsworld* (T) (2315841) 5.10 *Byker Grove* (T) (8221286)
5.35am Neighbours (T) (T) (217353)
6.00am News (T) and weather (834)
6.30am Regional News (898)
7.00am Holiday New series of the travel show, with presenter Jill Dando featuring reports from Western Australia, Ibiza, the resort of Hammerman in Tunisia and Walsby. (T) (8069)
7.30am Eastenders Phil's brought back to earth with a bang by a black cat. Joe goes missing, leaving Lorraine frantic with worry (T) (570)
8.00am Match of the Day - Live Strasbourg v Liverpool. Desmond Lynam introduces coverage of tonight's UEFA Cup second round, first-leg tie at the Stade de la Meinau. Commentary by Barry Davies and David Platt, with studio analysis from Alan Hansen and Trevor Brooking. (T) (7462584)
9.55am News (T) regional news and weather (978247)
10.30am Omnibus: The Fame and Shame of Salvador Dali In the concluding instalment of Ian Gibson's portrait of Salvador Dali, he travels to America, where the artist spent an eventful life (T) (25150) **Wales** 10.30 *Tales from the Health Service* (45518) 11.00 *Omigod* (57792) 12.00 *Grand Prix Snooker* (2415087) 12.50am *Film: Dali at Diabolo* (833803) 2.30 *News* headlines and weather (3552532)
11.30am Grand Prix Snooker Highlights of the fourth round (222402)
12.20am Dail (T) (1986) *Violent* - a story about who joins forces with cowboy Sidney Poitier to take on a marauding Apache chief and his bloodthirsty braves. Directed by Ralph Nelson (T) (722484)
2.00am Weather (850193)
VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes The numbers to be used to access the video PlusCodes are listed below, which allow you to programme your video recorder to watch a particular video. Tap in the Video PlusCode on the remote control to watch the video. VideoPlus+ is a trademark of VideoPlus+ Ltd.

- 6.00am Arts: The Great Exhibition** (24150) 6.30 *Informa*, *Ecstasy*, *Divine* (T) (17086)
7.00am See Hear Breakfast News (T and singing) (8237808)
7.15am Teletubbies (T) (5800228) 7.40 *Smurfs* Adventures (T) (4007955) 8.05 *Blue Peter* (T) (7789955) 8.30 *Cadogan* (T) (7133044) 8.40 *Rupert* (T) (236131) 8.45 *Harry and the Hendersons* (T) (T) (802913)
9.10am Wales: History (230150) 9.25 *See You, See Me* (787856) 9.45 *Numbers* (T) (838978) 10.00 *Teletubbies* (T) (T) (31285)
10.30am Watch (5489889) 10.45 *Teaching Today* (178334) 11.15 *Megamaths* (T) (5017985) 11.35 *History* (T) (3448063) 12.00 *See Hear* (T) (59711)
12.30pm Working Lunch (86353)
1.00am Fiddle Fiddle Bird (32165792) 1.10 *The Countryside Hour* (7355999)
2.10am Grand Prix Snooker Fourth-round action from Bournemouth (9425589)
6.00am The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air (T) (207402) 6.25 *Heartbreak High* (211978)
7.10am The O Zone Ash on his soundtrack for the new film *A Life Less Ordinary* (801624)
7.30am Private Investigations Residents from a small North Wales community, led up with the noise from a local factory, outline their complaints to the owner. Plus, a London woman searches for a cure for insomnia. Last in series (T) (112)
8.00am Dail Smith's *Winter Collection* A traditional Sunday roast (T) (256)
8.30am Looking Good The last in the series looks at the forthcoming party season and the trouser suit (T) (6773)
9.00am Till Death Do Us Part (T) (2315)
9.30am Holding On Final part of Tony Merchant's drama. Brenda and Claire find comfort in each other's company and make a few difficult decisions about their lives. Janet has an affair with a charismatic lawyer, while a dishevelled Shaun burns up on Annie's doorstep and Gary faces up to his drinking problem (T) (89518)
10.30am Newsworld (T) (558505)
11.35am Seinfeld (T) (806905)
11.40am The Larry Sanders Show (T) (300976)
12.00am The Phil Silvers Show (b/w) (4161483)
12.25am Weather (1654803)
12.30am Learning: Zee The Making of Benjamin Zaphranah (5265900) 12.35 *Volcanoes and the Atmosphere* (511744) 1.00 *Norfolk Broads: Conservation v Commercialism* (22909) 1.30 *The Conundrum of Existence* (53700) 2.00 *Chesham* (92021) 4.00 *The French Experience* 5-8 (52803) 5.00 *Business and Training: Career Moves* (28387)

- 6.00am GMTV** (4731150)
9.25am Supermarket Sweep (T) (3582315)
9.55am Regional News (782470)
10.00am The Time, The Place (28792)
10.30am This Morning (T) (7734957)
12.20pm Regional News (8889587)
12.30am News (T) and weather (5238908)
12.54am HTV Crime Stories (4221288)
12.55am Shortland Street (5213599) 1.30 *Home and Away* (T) (7673888) 1.50 *Cuisine* (T) (710724) 2.00 *Wanted* (T) (7429518) 2.30 *Fashion* (T) (906266)
3.30am News (4827247)
3.35am Regional News (4826518)
3.30am The Riddlers (740179) 3.40 *Wizards* (8222334) 3.50 *Zzap! Autumn Special* (8222334) 4.00 *The Adventures of Paddington Bear* (8125599) 4.15 *Hey Arnold!* (T) (897979) 4.40 *Sunny's Ears* (T) (1541288)
5.10am Wales: Don't Try This at Home Kids (3612179)
5.10am Relative Knowledge (3612179)
5.40am News (T) and weather (450131)
6.00am Home and Away (T) (201228)
6.25am HTV Weather (110537)
6.30am HTV News (T) (222)
7.00am Emmerdale (T) (5044)
7.30am Wales: Grass Roots The last in series comes from the Welsh Daily Show (266)
7.30am Take 3 Reports on issues affecting the region (266)
8.00am The Bill: Force Monroe goes out on the beat with Jarvis (T) (4792)
8.30am Paul Merton In Galton and Simpson's *Paul Merton* in the park. A couple who have been conducting a secret tryst in the park for the past few years discover that they are about to be found out (T) (2529)
9.00am Soldier, Soldier Prince's first race sees the boys inventing a foolproof way of making a killing (T) (971)
10.00am News (T) and weather (54286)
10.30am Regional News and weather (265773)
10.40am Network First: The Grimaldi Dynasty The effects of press intrusion on Prince Albert and Princess Caroline and Philip (T) (186814)
11.40am Wales: Alice Examining the changing culture of Wales (40228)
11.40am Charlie Grace: Take Me to the Pilot Drama about an LA detective grappling with the demands of single parenthood and a heavy casefile (40228)
12.10am Wales: Short Story (4144718)
12.40am Planet Mirth (1672209)
1.10am Late Look (316731) 2.05 *The Chart Show* (T) (264888) 3.00 *Football Extra* (T) (314532) 3.55 *World of Snooker* (8981551) 4.00 *Phenomena* (8703800) 4.35 *The Time, The Place* (T) (56945919) 5.00 *Heirloom* (T) (75890) 5.30 *News*

- As HTV West except:**
12.55-1.25am A Country Practice (5213599)
5.10-5.40am Shortland Street (3612179)
5.55-6.00am Air Watch (95864)
6.25-7.00am Central News (592353)
7.30-8.00am Heart of the Country (266)
11.40am Central Sports Special (956570)
12.40am Collins and Macdonald's Movie Club (897613)
1.15am Real Stories of the Highway Patrol (423535)
1.35am War of the Worlds (8957984)
2.25am The Paul Ross Show (5439864)
3.50am Central Jobfinder '97 (9377984)
5.20am Asian Eye (7826174)
WESTCOUNTRY
As HTV West except:
12.55-1.25am A Country Practice (5213599)
2.50-3.20am The Fashion Police (5082656)
5.10-5.40am Shortland Street (3612179)
6.25-7.00am Anglia Weather (111268)
6.25-7.00am Anglia News (523353)
7.30-8.00am Crown and Country (266)
11.40am Highlander (856570)
STARTS: 7.00am The Big Breakfast (80268)
9.00am Yagellon (86958)
11.30am The Living Sea (8976)
12.00am Sesame Street (51179)
12.30pm Rick Lake (71421)
1.00am Stot Meltham (3214112)
1.15am Pingu (3217995)
1.30am To Baldy Go (34018773)
1.50am Film: Buffalo Bill (32234131)
3.30am Collector's Lot (860)
4.00am Fifteen-to-One (985)
4.30am Feast (179)
5.30am Pump: Uned 5 (8150)
5.30am Countdown (131)
6.00am Newsworld (867880)
6.10am Hero (874532)
7.00am Pabst v Cwm (322805)
7.25am Brody Bach (80402)
8.00am Y Chyb Rydd (2334)
8.30am Newsworld (1841)
9.00am Equinox (7353)
10.00am Brookside (878908)
10.35am Presler (470179)
11.05am NYPD Blue (189452)
11.40am Schools: A Great Habit (91984)
1.00am-1.30am Black Bag (14377)

- 6.00am Sesame Street** (51179)
7.00am The Big Breakfast (80268)
9.00am Schools: Science in Focus (3570570)
9.25am Lost Animals (8882044) 9.30 *Eureka* (8332888) 9.45 *Stop, Look, Listen* (8321044) 10.00 *Fourways Farm* (311402) 10.10 *TVM* (2103537) 10.25 *How We Used To Live* (2182044) 10.45 *Quest* (842112) 11.00 *First Edition* (8072953) 11.15 *Stage One* (8368880)
11.30am The Living Sea: Project Seaba (T) (T) (8976)
12.00am Sesame Street (51179) 12.30pm *Light Lunch* (74247) 1.30 *About a Banana* Who has Lost His Skin. Puppet animation (56887268)
1.35am Crash Dive (1943, b/w) Second World War drama starring Tyrone Power. With Dana Andrews and Anne Baxter. Directed by Archie Mayo (T) (4072082)
3.30am Collector's Lot 1950s fashion (T) (860)
4.00am Fifteen-to-One (T) (985) 4.30 *Countdown* (T) (835841) 4.55 *Rick Lake*: Can Teen Curfew Cut Crime? (T) (8454570) 5.30 *Pet Rescue* (T) (131)
6.00am Brookside (804)
6.30am Roseanne: Let's Call It Quits There is a new supervisor at the factory (T) (824)
7.00am Channel 4 News (T) (73204)
7.55am Deadline 2000 Are cities sustainable centres for population? (650814)
8.00am Black Bag: A Very Private Practice The private fostering of West African children. Kns Akabusi and his brother Riba tell of their traumatic childhood (T) (2334)
8.30am Brookside Rachel finally turns the tables on Christine and Mick, changes his story concerning the events surrounding Gladys's death (T) (1841)
9.00am Cutting Edge: Sex, Lies and Allens A look behind the scenes at *The Sport* newspaper, which is ten years old this year (T) (7353)
10.00am Visions of Murder (1993) with Barbara Eden, Terry O'Quinn and James Brölin. A therapist has visions that one of her clients is murdering. Directed by Michael C. Shue (T) (122557)
11.40am Atlantic City (1980) Louis Malle's witty, bitter-sweet American tale about the gangster era. Starring Burt Lancaster and Susan Sarandon (T) (588518)
1.40am Late Night Rick Lake 1. Like Bad Girls (T) (1967174)
2.25am Arwiler (T) (8572938)
2.30am Up in the Clouds (T) (4212687)
2.45am Love's Secret (T) (4291174)
3.05am Extract (T) (3483551)
3.15am Boomerang Kids (T) (372735)
3.55am Permanent Wave (78872342)
4.00am Schools: Top (122938) 5.40 *T in English* (7047822)

CHANNEL 5 ON SATELLITE
Channel 5 is now broadcasting on transponder N 63 on the Astra Satellite. Viewers with a Videocrypt decoder will be able to receive the channel free of charge. Frequencies for transponder N 63 are: picture: 10.52075 GHz; sound: 7.02 and 7.02 MHz

6.00am 5 News Early (2656315)
7.30am Milkshake (759112) 7.35 *USA High* (T) (523614) 8.00 *Hawakoo* (8050711) 8.30 *WideWorld* (8059082)
9.00am Espresso (5222033) 10.00 *Exclusive* (867888) 10.30 *Period Rooms* (T) (804518)
11.00am Lesons (7014501) 11.50 *Double Espresso* (4454334) 12.00 *The Bold and the Beautiful* (T) (8020570) 12.30pm *Family Affairs* (T) (2189911)
1.00pm 5 News Update (T) (8982095) 1.05 *Sunset Beach* (T) (1087247) 2.00 *5's Company* (8434353)
3.30am Animal Behaviour (1989) starring Armand Assante, Karen Allen and Holly Hunter. Romantic comedy about a music professor who falls in love with an animal behaviourist. Directed by H. Anne Riley (3497112)
5.20pm 5's Company - Live Extra (55643421)
5.30am Whittle Audience participation quiz (T) (803334)
6.00am 100 Per Cent Game show without a host (8030247)
6.30am Family Affairs (T) (2189911)
7.00am Vanessa's Day with... *Edwina Currie* Vanessa Feltz spends the day with the former Conservative MP (T) (888889)
7.30pm 5 News (T) (8043711)
8.00am Exclusive As a prelude to tonight's football action, the programme talks to some of Britain's soccer stars, including Dean Holdsworth, Jamie Redknapp, David Beckham, Ryan Giggs, Les Sharp and David Ginola, plus an interview with the Chelsea squad (2007315)
8.15pm UEFA Cup Football Live coverage of Aston Villa's second-round, first-leg tie against Athletic Bilbao in Spain (3083599)
NB: Subsequent programmes are subject to late running and alteration
10.30pm Bring Me The Head of Light Entertainment (8047274)
11.00am The Jack Docherty Show Chat and comedy (5474570)
11.45pm Prisoner: Cell Block H (8676334)
12.45am Live and Dangerous - World Series Baseball Action from the third game in the World Series (75413993)
4.35am The Streets of San Francisco: Endgame (T) (857280)
5.30am 100 Per Cent (5107700)

For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see Vision, published on Saturday SKY 1

6.00am Morning Glory (7207) 9.00 *Reggie and Kate* (7207) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Come Winit* (7207) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 11.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 11.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 11.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 11.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 11.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 11.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 11.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 11.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 11.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 11.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 11.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 12.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 1.00pm *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 2.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 3.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 4.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 5.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 6.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 7.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 8.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 9.00 *Days of Our Lives* (8058) 10.00 *Days of*



BASEBALL 46

Marlins lose way as Cleveland level World Series

SPORT

TUESDAY OCTOBER 21 1997

SAILING 50

Edwards casts off in search of more records



£20m bait lures clubs to consider split

BY MARK SOUSTER

AT LEAST five of England's leading professional rugby union clubs are considering a breakaway tournament financed by a £20 million investment from Benfield, the reinsurance company built up by the late Matthew Harding, the former vice-chairman of Chelsea Football Club.

Sir John Hall, Andrew Brownswood, Nigel Wray, Chris Wright and Ashley Levett, the respective owners of Newcastle, Bath, Saracens, Wasps and Richmond, met in London yesterday to consider the proposal, which was first mooted and discussed more than two weeks ago.

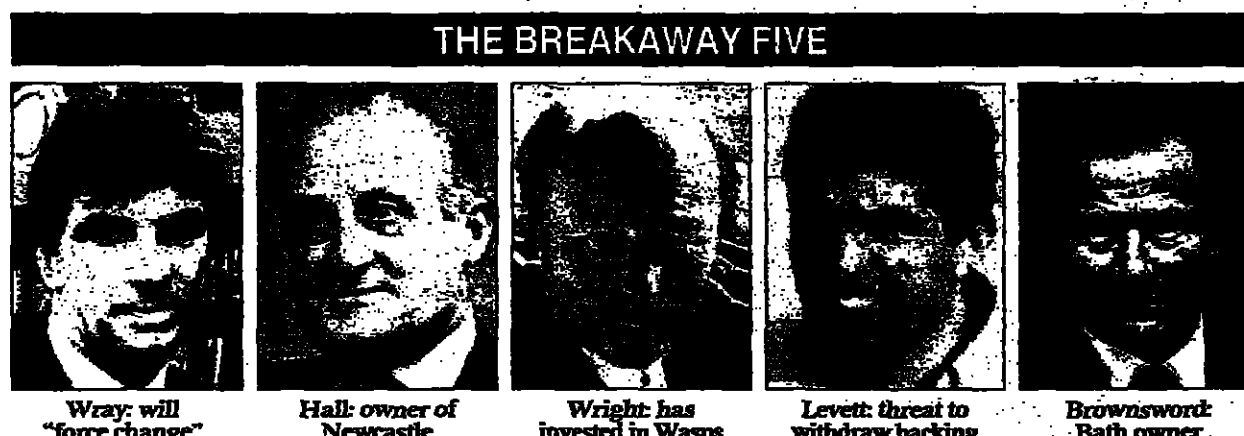
It is known that Benfield, a company worth in excess of £400 million, is interested in investing in the sport. Detailed discussions about a Super Six or Super Eight tournament — the latter which could include Sale, Leicester and Harlequins — have been held. If it happened, it would offer a financial lifeline for some of professional rugby's

individual investors. A spokesman for Benfield said yesterday: "We cannot discuss projects that we may or may not be involved in."

Significantly, Bristol, Gloucester, London Irish and Northampton either were not invited to the meeting or refused to attend. That in itself indicates the growing polarisation of opinion within the ranks of the Allied Dunbar Premiership first division. Harlequins and Leicester were not invited because they are not owned by an individual.

The renewed threat of a breakaway has been rumoured for some time and brings the sport full circle. Despite public gestures of goodwill and co-operation, under the surface — for some at least — little appears to have changed from the uncertainty of a year ago.

Money is at the root of the secret negotiations. The owners have become increasingly concerned at the scale of their losses, which are far greater than anticipated and, they



THE BREAKAWAY FIVE

Wray: will "force change" Hall: owner of Newcastle Wright: has invested in Wasps Levett: threat to withdraw backing Brownswood: Bath owner

consider, a direct result of the fractured structure to the season. England's international commitments leave nine Saturdays blank and mean that the clubs virtually shut down in November.

Levett said recently: "Things will happen on our own terms if we do not get a better-structured season. I have just watched Richmond's second home match of the

season and it is the second half of October. We do not rule out a breakaway or pulling our money out of the clubs unless we can stage home matches every fortnight, as they do in football."

"Under the current structure, Richmond will definitely not enter the European Conference if we are unfortunate enough to come below fourth place in the Premiership this

season. The Conference was a worthless, meaningless exercise — total rubbish."

Wray has also voiced his dissatisfaction. "We must have cash-flow," he said last weekend, "but we have two huge pauses in an important part of the season — September and then pre-Christmas. We will not tolerate a similar set-up next year. We will force the changes."

In a move that seems certain to reopen old wounds, the owners involved have also suggested refusing to release their contracted international players this autumn as a means of achieving their aim of regular fixtures. How players would react to being used, in effect, as chips in a poker game remains to be seen.

That is an area where the Rugby Football Union (RFU)

will watch with interest should the situation arise. Twickenham is known to want to have the international squad under direct contract, as well as to promote the concept of divisional rugby. Cliff Brindle, the chairman of the RFU's management board, insisted ten days ago, at a meeting with the top 24 clubs, that this was their goal.

Any breakaway might appear financially attractive in the short term, particularly for one or two hard-pressed owners and especially if a lucrative television deal could be secured. In the long term, it would seem suicidal. The clubs already have five-year agreements in place, signed only last season, with BSkyB and the RFU, and would face the risk of legal action should they decide to go their own way.

Keith Barwell, the owner of Northampton, refused to attend the meeting yesterday. "I declined to go because I believe that the owners involved are grossly misreading the situation," he said. "A

soccer-type revolution as planned is doomed to failure. On a business level they are experienced men and should be prepared to invest on a longer term and not be looking for short-term returns. But more importantly, on a rugby and player level, they are seriously misunderstanding what is going on."

To tear up the agreements in place is short-sighted and to talk about not releasing international players is counter-productive and tantamount to treason. I will not support anything which puts the players in a club versus country dilemma."

Whether by coincidence or design, it was made known yesterday that the RFU is considering giving clubs an extra £300,000 a year in recognition of their financial predicament. Although nothing has been finalised, the money would come from multimillion-pound sponsorship deals such as that recently signed with Carlsberg-Tetley, the new sponsors of the knockout cup.

Another setback for American

Agassi stumbles again pursuing former glories

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, IN STUTTGART

ANDRE AGASSI, the tarnished talisman of tennis, emphasised the decline in his standards when taking consolation from his opening-round defeat by Todd Martin here yesterday. After 70 minutes of resistance as spirited as it was erratic, Agassi was far from displeased because he had not been disgraced.

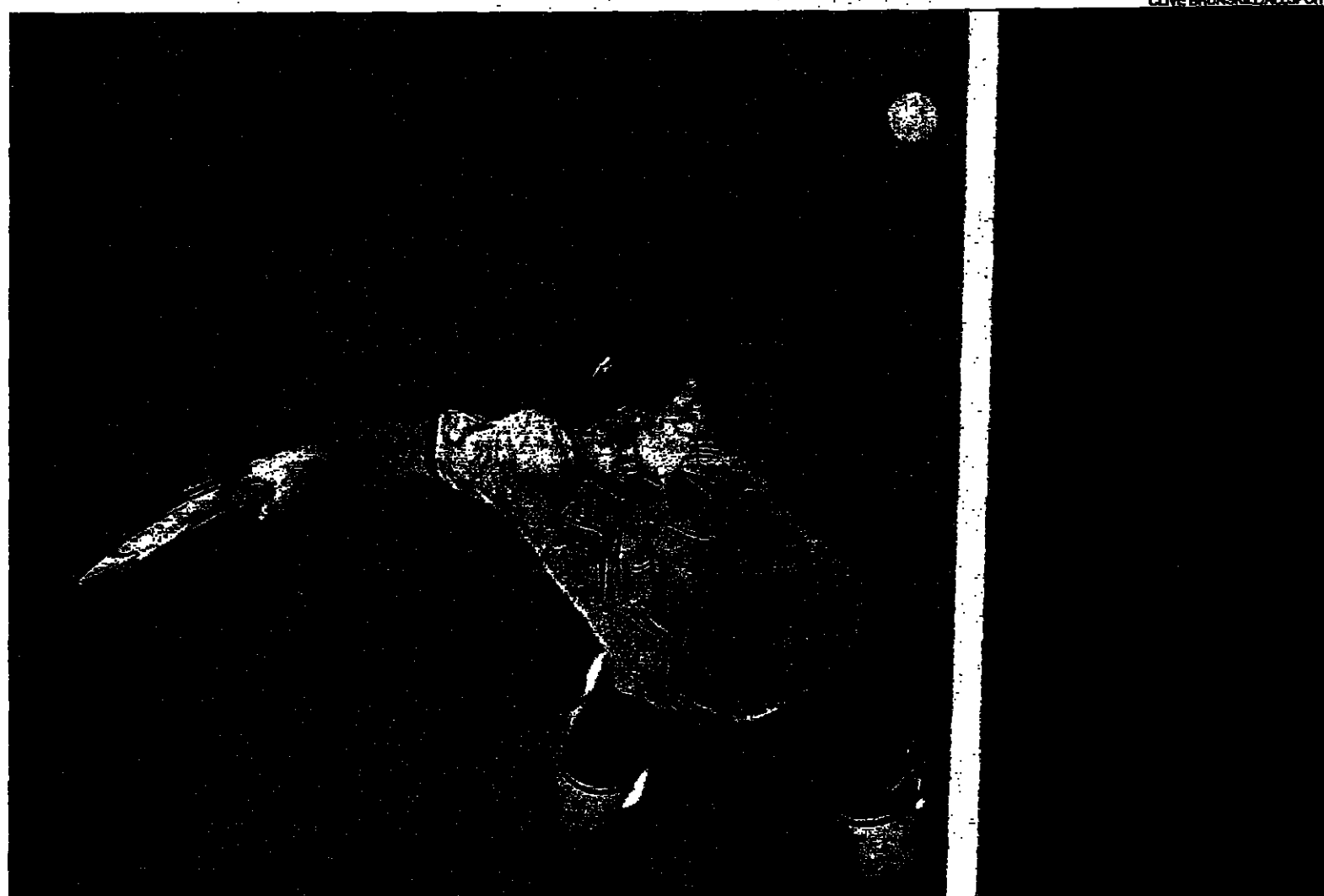
Even with odds stacked heavily against him, an element of charity is required to agree with the Las Vegas resident. True, this Eurocard Open was his first competitive

outing in seven weeks, and his first outside his native country this year. Yet Agassi's tribulations are entirely of his own making. That he wasn't distraught at losing to a man he had beaten on their past five encounters, spanning more than three years, offered compelling evidence of his diluted ambition. "I am still not at the stage where I get mad if I lose," the former world No 1 said.

Agassi, 27, was plainly unfit for his eagerly-anticipated return to Europe. A heavy sweat

permeated his shirt from the outset, although he struck several piercing groundstrokes when his footwork could keep pace with his mind. The final denouement was that Agassi, now world-ranked No 102, could muster not a single opportunity against the Martin service. His opponent, by contrast, conjured a break in each set to prevail 6-4, 6-4.

It was the eighth time this year that Agassi has stumbled at the first hurdle. And this was a classic case of a player succumbing to a lesser talent. It should have hurt. Instead, Agassi spoke of his new-found commitment, of unrealistic expectations, of the long road back. "With hard work," he forecast, "I could literally be playing great tennis a couple of months into next year."



Agassi, serving against Martin yesterday, is still easily recognisable, although not as the player he was when he conquered Wimbledon

finised his priorities — as it was bound to, given the unyielding demands of maintaining a world ranking inside the top ten. To his credit, Agassi recognised that there was more to life than the sound of ball on highly-strung gut. "I do everything intensely," he said. "When I got to No 1, it was tennis, tennis, tennis. It is not easy to do that for more than a few years."

Perhaps Shields is now in a position to inspire him. "The only American I'm aware of who works harder than Brooke is the president of the United States," he said. "She is

like the damn Energiser Bunny. Quite honestly, I think I have been nothing short of frustrating for her on that level."

Fortunately for Agassi, the tennis community will invest untold patience in his rehabilitation. The game sorely needs him at his best — even if his appearance, like his game, is a shadow of the image which hypnotised Wimbledon in 1992. His blistering groundstrokes offer the perfect antidote to the advancing serve-and-volleyers.

There were fleeting glimpses on display here, one

job in particular called clean over the 6ft 6in silhouette of Martin before excessive top spin brought the ball down comfortably inside the baseline. Shots like that simply cannot be taught.

Meanwhile, Tim Henman, who teamed up with Rafter to post a first-round doubles victory over Karsten Braasch and Menno Oosting, opens his quest for the singles title today against Tommy Haas. Greg Rusedski's second-round opponent will be another local hope, Nicolas Pietrangeli, who dismissed Thomas Johansson in three sets.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8 9 10 11 12

13 14 15 16 17 18 19

20 21 22 23 24

No 1230

- ACROSS**
- 1 Theme: one under ruler (7)
 - 5 Showy bedding plant: is unable (Scott) (5)
 - 8 Top-floor room (5)
 - 9 Tennyson poem: Gen — S Grant (7)
 - 10 Without hesitation (4,1,4)
 - 12 Piercing tool (3)
 - 13 "Tide-defying" king (6)
 - 14 Armet, anklet (6)
 - 17 Part of circle: Joan of it (3)
 - 18 Old-fashioned: expired (3,2,4)
 - 20 Feverish (7)
 - 21 Unexpected extra (5)
 - 23 Monarch's domain (5)
 - 24 Playhouse (7)
- SOLUTION TO NO 1229**
- ACROSS:** 3 Vagabond 7 Sedate 8 Chador 9 Trout 10 No ball 11 Shed 13 Beard 15 Sect 17 Warhol 18 Darken 19 Arful 20 Ornate 21 Leapfrog
- DOWN:** 1 Heath 2 Hazard 3 Venture 4 Ashford 5 Ordinance 6 Decelict 11 Snowball 12 Ex gratia 15 Beowulf 14 Road hog 15 Spring 16 Cresta

Strachan linked with Benfica

BY DAVID MADDOCK

GORDON STRACHAN, the Coventry City manager, emerged yesterday at the centre of a battle of supremacy at Benfica when Valedo, who is expected to take over as president of the Portuguese club, named Strachan as the man he wants to be coach at the Stadium of Light.

The former Scotland international impressed Valedo in the FA Carling Premiership last season. If he is voted into the post today, Valedo is understood to want to make immediate contact with Highfield Road.

Valedo has been quoted in the Portuguese press as saying: "Gordon Strachan would be my first option as the coach to lead Benfica into the future."

Benfica's only other British connection is Scott Minto, the former Chelsea defender, who was signed from Stamford Bridge on a free transfer in the summer.

Paul Gascoigne has suggested that he is in no rush to leave Scotland, despite an almost universal feeling that he is heading home.

The England international will spend the next week scrutinising approaches from Aston Villa, Tottenham Hotspur and Crystal Palace. Mel Stein, the player's agent, confirmed that the three clubs have made contact with Rangers.

"It is true that there have been approaches from the three clubs, and we will look at their offers," Stein said. "But it is premature to say that Paul will be moving anywhere. Nothing is imminent, and he is very happy in Scotland."

Paul will only move if the

offer is right for him. There has been lots of speculation, but he has never asked to leave Rangers, and he remains very happy with his situation. There is no pressure on him to go, he signed a new contract recently, and he is happy to honour it."

Villa remain favourites, however, to sign Gascoigne, possibly early next week. They have made a definite bid, and while Rangers have said that the decision over Gascoigne's future will remain solely with the player, it is clear the Scottish club is happy to do business.

One club that will definitely not be joining the race to sign Gascoigne is Newcastle United, who reported, at yesterday's annual meeting, a £4 million increase in wages over the past year. The 30-year-old might be tempted to return to his former club, but Kenny Dalglish, the manager, has decided he cannot meet Gascoigne's financial package.

The other leading issue in Scottish football rumbled on yesterday when the premier division's breakaway teams were warned by the lower-division clubs that they need to come up with something new

to break the present deadlock.

Lex Gold, the Hibernian chairman, who is the spokesman for the top-flight clubs, wants a working group to meet this week for representatives from both sides to resolve their differences.

Jim Oliver, the Partick Thistle chairman, speaking for the lower-division clubs, insisted further talks were pointless unless the premier teams were prepared to outline their intentions in greater detail.

Oliver said: "The working group was set up on the insistence of the top clubs and



Strachan: in demand

LONG distance, UP TO 66% CHEAPER than BT?

THINK

all information was supposed to flow into it — if they have anything new to say then we can meet again, but the position seems to be they think they have given all the information they think they can, which we feel is not enough."

"There are so many questions which remain unresolved, not least who they have lined up to replace Bells as league sponsors. The first division clubs stand to lose most."

Newcastle in black — 27

THE TIMES BOOKSHOP

CROSSWORD ENTHUSIASTS — SPECIAL OFFER:

The Times Jumbles Crossword Book, 2 is available to Times readers for just £4 (RSP £4.99). While supplies last from The Times Bookshop.

Compiling volumes of The Times Two Crosswords Book 6 — £2.99, The Times Crosswords (Volumes 10, 11, 12, 13 — £3.99 each) and Times Computer Crosswords on disk may also be ordered, with free delivery, along with any other books from The Times Bookshop.

To order supply call 0904 134 434 for credit card orders or for further details. If paying by cheque/P.O., please make payable to The Times Bookshop and send to: The Times Bookshop, PO Box 545, Falmouth, TR11 2YX. Delivery in 10-14 days and subject to availability.